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- ART. VI. — 1. *Correspondence relative to the Earl of Elgin's Special Missions to China and Japan.* 1857. Presented to the House of Lords by Command of Her Majesty, 1859. London: Printed by Harrison and Sons. Folio. pp. 488.
2. *China. Being the Times' Special Correspondence from China in the Years 1857-58*, reprinted by Permission, with Corrections and Additions by the Author, GEORGE WINGROVE COOKE, Author of the History of Party, &c. London and New York: G. Routledge & Co. 1858. 12mo. pp. 457.

SCARCELY was the ink dry with which we traced words of encouragement to peaceful enterprise in China, and hope for internal tranquillity, when the news came to us of disgrace and disaster to Western arms, and of the beginning of a fresh conflict, the end of which no one can foresee. Never before has such provocation been given to the evil impulses of our civilized and Christianized nature, as at the forts of the Peiho, in June last. It is exasperated by a consciousness of mistake all round,—in statesmanship at home, if the instructions were peremptory, in diplomacy abroad, if discretion was unwisely exercised, and in the executive skill and tact of the parties. Nay, if we probe still deeper, there are memories of earlier errors, at least as far back as the preceding year, which do not assuage irritation. It will not make the British nation, or at least the British dominant politicians, less restless under disaster, to feel that the seed of trouble was planted long ago, and that a more gentle and tolerant policy would, in the end, have been better. Added to all these rather unworthy elements is the far higher one, which would stir the heart of any nation,—sympathy with the gallant sailors and soldiers, led, not driven, to slaughter, and perishing ingloriously under the fire of a despised foe. All these particulars combine to form a provocation by these Oriental heathens such as has never been given before, and in comparison with which the petty indignities—the burning of opium-chests and the penning up of a plenipotentiary in the Canton factories—which lighted up a war twenty years ago, are as nothing. Nay, further, such is the character of the blow the Chinese have struck, so deep

and ragged the wound they have inflicted on British pride,—for the French wrong was infinitesimal in comparison,—that it is hoping against hope to imagine that wisdom of counsel will so far prevail, in and out of Parliament, as to prevent this war. English statesmen watch the currents of popular sentiment as closely and shrewdly as do politicians on this side of the Atlantic, and are betrayed into as many inconsistencies; and we very much fear that the recollection of Lord Palmerston's popular triumph, in 1857, on a China question, is too fresh to permit the risk of another appeal of the same kind, and that at least some of the sympathy then so exuberant with the poor Chinese has dried up in the comfortable atmosphere of office. Parliament does not ordinarily assemble till February, by which time armaments will be on their way to the scene of offence, and the military arrangements will be matured; and though we doubt not the Tory Opposition, and the Manchester party, who can afford to be consistent, will force on a discussion of the whole China policy, we repeat it, we have but faint hope that what we consider a serious and pestilent mischief will be arrested. The civilized world will probably have to try to make the best of it, though the authors and helpers and abettors must ultimately be condemned by public opinion and in history. It will not be the first time that an unjust war, like cholera or famine, works out some good result; for in one, and the lowest sense, we may admit that it is not always "woe unto the world because of offences"; but we do not doubt that in these Oriental and semi-Oriental relations,—in Greece, in India, in Persia, and in China,—it will be "woe unto that man" or set of men "by whom the offence cometh." The controlling spirit directing England's foreign policy was the same in 1839, in 1850, in 1855, in 1857, and in 1859. Lord Palmerston was Foreign Secretary when the Opium War broke out; when the Piræus was blockaded; when the Outram armament, with its train of military suicides, assailed Persia; when Oude was annexed; when the Arrow outrage was avenged; and is now prime minister, when a new war against China is initiated.

Looking to the immediate future with little hopefulness, with anxiety lest our material interests may be endangered,

and with gratitude beyond the reach of words that no responsibility for what has happened, or is about to happen, rests on us or our representatives abroad, we consider it very important to resume the thread of the narrative begun in our last number, (and in such discussions the narrative form is the best,) having the new materials supplied by the Parliamentary publication of Lord Elgin's despatches and the clever work of Mr. Cooke, the Times' correspondent, — for, as we may have occasion to show, the revelations of the Times were often authoritative.

The Parliamentary discussion, the ministerial crisis, and the dissolution which followed in the spring of 1857, are in the recollection of our readers. The debate in both Houses was marked by great ability, and rather more than usual party asperity, the strongest, most earnest, and most vehement speakers against Lord Palmerston being some of his present colleagues.

"We have heard much," said Lord John Russell, now Foreign Minister, "of late, — a great deal too much, I think, — of the *prestige* of England. We used to hear of the character, of the reputation, and the honor of England. I trust the character, the reputation, the honor, are dear to us all; but if the prestige of England is to be separate from the character, the reputation, the honor, of the country, then I, for one, have no wish to maintain it."

"I am not anxious," said Mr. Sydney Herbert, now Secretary of War, "that we should go on piling up, year after year, fresh offences against the public opinion of Europe, until some day we may reap the consequence, to our detriment. I cannot stifle the feelings within me, when I read of these things at Canton. I see with the deepest sorrow force exercised with so little mercy, upon a pretext so transparent, — I will not say, so transparently fraudulent, — in a manner so destructive to the character of this country for truth, justice, faith, and mercy." — 144 *Hansard*, 1679.

"I believe," said Mr. Milner Gibson, now President of the Board of Trade, "that the cause of these foreign implications, in China and Persia, is to be traced to what has been well called the mischievous activity of the noble Lord at the head of the government." — *Ibid.* 1749.

But all this was nothing in comparison with Mr. Gladstone's denunciation.

“War,” said he, “taken at the best, is a frightful scourge to the human race; but because it is so, the wisdom of ages has surrounded it with strict laws and usages, and has required formalities to be observed, which shall act as a curb upon the wild passions of man, to prevent that scourge from being let loose, unless under circumstances of full deliberation, and from absolute necessity. You have dispensed with all these precautions. You have turned a consul into a diplomatist, and that metamorphosed consul is, forsooth, to be at liberty to direct the whole might of England against the lives of a defenceless people. While war is a scourge and curse to man, it is yet attended with certain compensations. It is attended with acts of heroic self-sacrifice and of unbounded daring. It is ennobled by a consciousness that you are meeting equals in the field, and that, while you challenge the issue of life or death, you at least enter into a fair encounter. But you go to China, and make war upon those who stand before you as women and children. They try to resist you; they call together their troops; they load their guns; they kill one man and wound another in action; but while they are doing so, you perhaps slay thousands. They are unable to meet you in the field. You have no equality of ground on which to meet them. You can earn no glory in such warfare. And it is those who put the British flag to such uses that stain it. It is not from them that we are to hear rhetorical exaggerations on the subject of the allegiance that we owe to the national standard. Such is the case of the war in China.”

It was on the 5th of March, 1857, after the ministerial statement of the intention to dissolve was made, that, in reply to a very earnest and direct question from Sir Francis Baring,—for he seemed to treat all other interpellation with scorn,—Lord Palmerston admitted that the government meant to supersede Sir John Bowring, and to send out a new and special Plenipotentiary, though he gave no intimation who the new envoy was to be. That secret was discreetly veiled; but if we mistake not, it was soon whispered, and then officially announced, before the results of the new election were ascertained, that the Earl of Elgin was to be the man. Parliament was dissolved on the last day of March, and Lord Elgin’s appointment must have been gazetted soon after, so that the Ministry dexterously appealed to the people, on the ground, not only of the policy and necessity of punishing what were called “insults from China,” but of their moderation and

forecast in putting aside the principal agent in their own work, and deputing in his place so considerate and able a man as Lord Elgin was, on all sides, reputed to be, — one, too, who, as it was understood and the result showed, had no sympathy with the original action at Canton.\* Having done this, and secured his working majority, Lord Palmerston did not open his lips on the subject of China again ; nor from 1857 has any authoritative revelation of actual occurrences in the East been made, except the publication, in 1859, of the Blue Book which is the special subject of this article. Lord Elgin's appointment gave satisfaction everywhere. The French government, having a grievance of its own to redress, united in the policy adopted by Great Britain, and Baron Gros, an accomplished and experienced diplomatist of the old school, especially well known in England, from his connection with the Buenos Ayrean and Greek complications, was despatched to the scene of action.

Before tracing further the course of European diplomacy, we must turn our attention to the action of our own government. In our former article we stated that Secretary Marcy had, in a despatch to Mr. Parker, just before the close of President Pierce's administration, repudiated in the strongest language all idea of active co-operation with Great Britain against the Chinese. This despatch could not have reached China before May, and probably was not known at all in Europe, where, no doubt, the correspondence of Sir John Bowring had created the strongest hopes that we would be willing to join in the fray. Sir John had every reason to think so. In the instructions to Lord Elgin, as late as the end of April, Lord Clarendon seemed to think our active military co-operation probable. Thus reasoning, and thus encouraged, on the 14th of March, 1857, ten days after the

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\* Lord Elgin, in writing to Lord Clarendon, on the 12th of December, in reference to a communication he had directed to be made to the Cantonese, said : —

“ In stating that case, I have endeavored to rest it on the broadest basis, and to point out the fact that the other treaty powers, America included, have been compelled, during the subsistence of the existing treaties, to seek by menace, or by the employment of force, satisfaction for wrongs inflicted at Canton. I think that I have given to the ‘Arrow’ case as much prominence as it deserves, when I represent it as the drop which has caused the cup to overflow.”

inauguration of the new President and the adjournment of Congress, Lord Napier addressed a note to the Secretary of State, enclosing the orders sent for the vigorous prosecution of hostilities in China, and soliciting the active co-operation of the United States.\*

“Her Majesty’s government,” wrote Lord Napier, “entertains a confident hope that the Cabinet of the United States, on a due consideration of the rights which they have to vindicate, and the interests they have to protect, may be enabled to grant to Great Britain that concurrence and active co-operation which the government of France has already accorded, and that they will authorize their naval and political authorities in China to act heartily in concert with the agents of the two allied powers.”

There is, we confess, sometimes an inexplicable mystery of ignorance among English public men as to our system, with its limitations of executive action. Here is an instance of it. Surely Lord Clarendon and Lord Napier ought to have known that, without the assent of the Congress just dissolved, “active co-operation,” which, *ex vi termini*, means war, and was, in the documents accompanying Lord Napier’s letter, defined to be war and blockade, was out of the question; and we might imagine that at least one of these gentlemen must have known that a new President would never convoke Congress for such an object, or if he did, that Congress would never grant its consent. It makes one almost suspect that the application was made in order that it might be refused. Be this as it may, it enabled our government to set itself and other people right; to show its entire willingness, by deputing a special Minister with full instructions, to unite in all peaceful measures of redress; and yet to put an end at once and forever, and that too without offence, to all notion that then or thereafter we were to be dragged into the quarrels, creditable or discreditable, of other nations. On the 10th of April, 1857, Mr. Cass answered Lord Napier’s note, in a despatch of great ability, which we regret we have not room to quote at length; and immediately afterward, on the 18th, the President ap-

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\* Sir John Bowring’s despatch narrating the attack on the Barrier Forts by the American naval forces, reached London on the 16th of January, 1857.

pointed Mr. Reed as special Envoy to China, in this respect exactly following the example of Great Britain and France, and showing his disposition to make our diplomacy, at least, correspond with that of the Allies. Mr. Reed's instructions, which were published long since, were dated in May, and were, on the point of co-operation, but an expression of the views contained in the letter to Lord Napier. He sailed from Hampton Roads on the 1st of July, 1857, in the frigate *Minnesota*, direct for China, by the way of the Cape of Good Hope. Thus, all the Western Ministers were *en route* for what, when they set out, was the most interesting scene of action in the East, but which was soon to resign this distinction for the very sad and ghastly drama of the Indian Mutiny.

Lord Elgin left England, with the promise that, coincidently with his arrival in China, he should be furnished with large and available reinforcements, both from home and from India. On the 3d of June he reached Singapore, and there was greeted by the terrific news of the great mutiny in the valley of the Ganges, and by a demand from the Governor-General of India for all the troops destined for China. Mr. Reed, on his arrival at the Cape of Good Hope, in September, met the same intelligence. Sir George Grey had stripped the Colony of every soldier. There were scarcely artillerymen enough to fire a salute. Never was there a more striking realization of what the Marquis Wellesley had foretold long before, that rescue to India might some day come from the colonies at the extremity and on the coast of Africa. In all the narratives we have read of the horrors of this Indian revolt, we know nothing more impressive than the hurried letter from Lord Canning, asking for the diversion of this Chinese expeditionary force, now given to the world. The agitation, almost anguish, of the writer's spirit seems to break through the formalities of official style, in the following extract from his letter to Lord Elgin :—

“ A mutiny of the native troops has broken out at the military station of Meerut, in the Northwest Provinces. The city of Delhi is in the possession of the mutineers. The European officers of more than one regiment have been shot by their men ; European women, children, and unarmed men have been butchered. The numbers are not yet



known to me, but it is reported that at Meerut not less than forty have perished. From Delhi no trustworthy report has been received, but some of the chief civil officers of government are amongst those who have been killed; and although all this has happened in a part of the country which is by no means the weakest in respect of European troops, more than a fortnight must pass between the commission of these atrocities and the collection of a European force strong enough to punish the rebels effectually.

"But it is not with reference to actual disturbances at Meerut and Delhi that I ask your Lordship's aid. In the valley of the Ganges, between Calcutta and Agra, for a length of 750 miles, there are barely 1,000 European soldiers; whilst there are several towns and stations of importance, containing forts, magazines, treasuries, and large civil communities of Europeans, which are held by native troops alone. If mutinous rebellion raises its head at any of these spots, the government of India is literally without any force wherewith to put it down. The mutineers would carry everything before them, and we now know how they would use the opportunity. The flame would spread like wildfire, and would rage uncontrolled. Every day during which Delhi remains in the hands of the rebels is an encouragement to a rising elsewhere. This state of things is full of danger. I know that the native regiments in some of the most important of the stations to which I have referred are disaffected.

"I have drawn from Madras the only European regiment which that Presidency can safely spare.

"The withdrawal of two more regiments from Pegu, which will take place the moment that conveyance can be procured, will exhaust that province.

"The European force from the Persian Gulf cannot be at Calcutta for some weeks, and may be many weeks on its journey.

"The need, therefore, is very great and very urgent." — *Blue Book*, p. 8.

There was no hesitation on Lord Elgin's part. Every available soldier was sent to Calcutta. Steamers were despatched to intercept the transports that might be coming by the Straits of Sunda, and, unattended by any of the reinforcements which he hoped to carry with him to the rescue of the frightened and almost beleaguered settlement at Hong Kong, he reached the south of China alone, early in July.

It is difficult to imagine a more embarrassing position than this in which his Lordship was placed, on his arrival.

Stripped of his troops ; far in advance of his colleagues ; perplexed by the urgent advice of the Admiral and the residents of Hong Kong, who thought that nothing should be attempted in the north till the Canton difficulty was settled and Yeh punished, — Lord Elgin had no little difficulty in holding to the anchorage of his own opinions, and of his instructions to go to the Peiho. He applied to the American and French Ministers to accompany him. Mr. Parker replied, that he was without instructions from the new Administration, and had no clew to their wishes. With the French Minister, M. de Bourbolon, he was more unfortunate. On his way through Paris, Lord Elgin had been intrusted with sealed despatches for M. de Bourbolon, which he forwarded, with a request for co-operation in the expedition to the north.

“Unfortunately, my Lord,” wrote M. de Bourbolon, “a despatch from Count Walewski, of which your Excellency was the bearer, and which I found under the same cover as that enclosing the letter to which I have the honor of replying, has caused a remarkable change in this situation as far as I am concerned. The government of his Imperial Majesty has determined that, in the presence of the high mission intrusted to your Excellency, France could not be properly represented by an agent of my rank in the negotiations which are about to be opened with the Cabinet of Peking, and it announces to me that his Majesty the Emperor has made choice of Baron Gros to fill the post of Ambassador Extraordinary in China. As, in other respects, Count Walewski’s despatch does not instruct me to take any part in the negotiations which Baron Gros is charged to carry on with the Chinese government, I must consider the special powers which were conferred on me as revoked by the fact of the nomination of this Ambassador, and my part in these important transactions to be terminated.” — *Blue Book*, p. 17.

Lord Elgin then tried to persuade the French Admiral to accompany him, but met with no better success, and there seemed no alternative but to go north alone, or to remain in entire inaction in the Canton River, awaiting the slow advent of the French and American Envoys. “The practical effect of the nomination of a special Commissioner by the French government,” wrote Lord Elgin, “has been to deprive me, for this year, of the co-operation on which, in the absence of such a

nomination, I might have counted." At this juncture further news, and more urgent demands, came from Calcutta.

"I wish I could announce to your Lordship," wrote Lord Canning, on the 24th of June, "that the necessity under which I at first addressed you had in any degree passed away. This is not the case. The mutinies have extended; a great portion of the Northwest Provinces is in anarchy; and there have been risings of the troops in other parts of India, attended with horrible atrocities committed upon Europeans: and although, wherever our small handful of European troops pushes its way, the mutineers and rebels are speedily crushed, and order is in part restored, yet the European force at the disposal of the government is so small, that on the right or left of the line of march pillage and murder continue to break out, and the means of repressing them are altogether wanting.

"Her Majesty's government has been asked to send out twelve regiments immediately, but this request will not reach England until late in July, and the troops must be many weeks on their passage.

"I am therefore compelled to beg that your Lordship will send to Calcutta every European soldier that you can spare of those who are on their way from England to China. I do not ask for the small force which garrisons Hong Kong." — *Blue Book*, p. 27.

Again, on the 21st of July, he wrote: "I earnestly appeal to your Lordship to send me every European soldier that yourself and General Ashburnham can, by any contrivance, or justifiable sacrifice, spare to me." This had been already done; but having at his command the frigate Shannon, her crew, and her heavy guns, which, though quite available in India, were of no use whatever in the Chinese waters, Lord Elgin determined to go himself to Calcutta, and place all he had at the disposal of the Governor-General. He accordingly sailed on the 16th of July, and thus was closed rather inauspiciously the first act of the new diplomacy in China. This Blue Book discloses the very interesting fact, that the organization of Sir William Peel's naval brigade, which did so gallant service at Lucknow and Delhi, is mainly due to the forecast of Lord Elgin.

Painful as was at the time this frustration of the English plan, there can be no doubt that, had Lord Elgin in the summer of 1857 gone to the north alone, or unaccompanied by a strong and imposing force, or indeed gone at all, before some-

thing striking had been done at Canton, the disappointment would have been greater. The fact is, that at the very time when Lord Elgin was lamenting his inability to move to the Peiho, and thence to seek access to Peking, the experiment was making by the Russians, and utterly failed.

Admiral Count Poutiatine — a Russian officer of high rank, and one thoroughly acquainted, from his military experience, with the East — had been appointed Plenipotentiary to China, and reached the frontier settlement at Kiachta, by the overland route, early in the season. Unable to communicate thence with Peking, he pursued his journey, and, reaching the mouth of the Amoor, embarked on board the steamer *Amerilla*, and arrived in the Gulf of Pechelee in the month of June. He had an interview with the officials at the mouth of the Peiho, who promised him an answer in a specified time to a letter which they agreed to forward to Peking. Not caring to remain longer than was necessary at this desolate anchorage, he went to Japan, and thence to Shanghae, returning to the Peiho only to meet a positive refusal to allow him to approach the capital. He then proceeded south to join the other Plenipotentiaries, who, in the months of October and November, — Lord Elgin having in the mean time returned from India, — had all arrived at or near Hong Kong. The special representatives of the Western powers were at last all assembled.

The first movement made was the application of the American Envoy to Yeh for an interview. Mr. Reed was the only one of the Ministers in a position to make this advance, and he was explicitly instructed by his government to do so. The Russian Envoy had been already refused an audience, and the English and French were, to use Lord Elgin's word, in an "abnormal" attitude, and could no longer parley, or at least not till they were prepared to strike. Yeh declined the interview, giving as his reason, that, owing to the ravages the English forces had made, there was no place in which they could properly meet; and evading with characteristic subtlety, but in entire courtesy, the reasoning with which Mr. Reed urged the interview. It is now very clear, from the revelations since made as to Yeh's doggedness, and the orders he had received from court, that no good would have come from any attempt at

mediation, had it been made, and that this obdurate man's doom was pre-ordained. In or about the middle of December, 1857, soon after the ultimatum of the allied powers was sent, Yeh despatched a memorial to the Emperor, which, though one cannot read it without a smile, shows how much intelligence, dashed and brewed with lies, the Chinese receive, probably through the domestic spies that are maintained everywhere. Beneath the grotesque surface of the following paper is much that is true, and not a little in the way of speculation that is sagacious.

"Since the engagement of the 10th of the 5th moon (1st June), a period of more than six months, the English barbarians have made no disturbance up the Canton River. It should be known, however, that in the defeat sustained by Elgin at Mang-ga-ta, in the 7th moon, he was pursued by the Bengal barbarian force to the sea-shore. A number of French men-of-war, which happened to be passing, fired several guns in succession, and, the force of the Bengal barbarians falling back, the Chief Elgin made his escape. The Chief Elgin was very grateful to the French force for saving his life, and on the arrival of the French Minister, who, in the beginning of the 9th moon, had also reached Kwangtung, he, the Chief Elgin, feted the Chief Gros at Hong Kong (*lit.*, merrily feasted, and prayed him [to drink] wine), and consulted him upon the present position of affairs in China. The Chief Gros said: 'I was not an eyewitness of the commencement of the last year's affairs, but the story current among the people of different nations, who were by at the time, has made me familiar with the whole question. You see, when the forts were taken, the Chinese government made no retaliation; when the houses of the people were burned, it still declined to fight. Now, the uniform suppression, three years ago, of the Kwangtung insurrection, in which some hundreds of thousands were engaged, shows the military power of China to be by no means insignificant. Will she take no notice of her injuries? (No.) She is certain to have some deep policy which will enable her so to anticipate us, that, before we can take up any ground, she will have left us without the means of finding fault with her; while she, on the other hand, will oblige the foreigners to admit themselves completely in the wrong.' . . . .

"Elgin passes day after day at Hong Kong, stamping his foot and sighing, and his anxiety is increased by the non-arrival of despatches from his government."—p. 127.

On the 28th of December the blow was struck, and almost

without a struggle the city of Canton, claimed by the Chinese to be impregnable, fell into the hands of the allies. Yeh was now a captive. No one can read the correspondence between Yeh and the English and French Plenipotentiaries without new wonder at his dogged and stupid resolution, and at their moderation and reluctant resort to force. Especially is this the case with Lord Elgin. It was certainly a sad necessity, and no one who remembers Canton as it once was,—its crowded thoroughfares, its suburbs, where at least the foreigner could safely walk, and in whose gay shops, filled with unrivalled fabrics, (for such are Canton wares,) he was always welcome, its river swarming with boats, its factories and factory garden, the abode of luxury and comfort, (we have never met a man who was not fond of his factory residence,) the churches and hospitals, the surrounding scenery, picturesque in its sameness, with the gentle, branching river, and the forts, like clumps of trees, and the white cloud-hills, looking serenely down,—none who remembers all this can look on Canton now, and ever since its capture, but with sorrow for the necessity which desolated it. It is, or lately was, a city of hideous ruins: Pompeii is more cheerful,—for Chinese ruins have no grandeur or dignity or beauty about them. Fire and shot and shell make thorough work with the slight brick, stucco, and bamboos of a Chinese structure. It looks like the water suburb of an American town after a fire. There is hardly a boat on the river. The shops are but partially filled and cautiously opened, and the factory grounds, once so neat and picturesque, literally swept with the besom of destruction, scraped up, rooted out; nothing left except, as in mockery, the stone steps at which the foreigner used to embark, and where, on the night of the 14th of December, 1857, the few that were left stole their way from the advancing flames to their boats.

One revelation of much interest is connected with the fall of Canton. In the Yamun of Yeh were found the originals of the English, French, and American ratified treaties of 1842 and 1844, an imperial decree directing Yeh's conduct as to the revision of the treaties, a report by Keying to the Emperor as to his management of the foreigners, and reports of the

Envoys who met Mr. McLane and Sir John Bowring in 1854, sent to Yeh for his guidance with the imperial annotations. Of the last two we shall speak hereafter, in connection with what occurred at Tientsin, making but an incidental remark here as to the others. There is, we think, no reason for the popular idea, that, because the treaties were found in Yeh's possession at Canton, they had never been at the capital. All accessible evidence shows that everything done at Canton was reported to Peking, and there approved or disavowed. A copy of the treaties, with all the details of the tariffs, was published in an official form at the capital, and is now extant, and the probability is that the originals were deposited at Canton for use, where alone, according to the imperial theory, foreign affairs could be transacted, and indeed for the very purpose of confirming that idea. When, several months later, Mr. Reed restored — having received it from the allied Ministers — the American treaty as an historical and official record to the Commissioners in the north, they received it with great respect, and promised that it should be deposited — as strictly it ought always to have been — at the capital; and it no doubt was the discovery of these documents at a distance that led to the adoption of the articles in the American treaty of Tientsin, which provide not only for the promulgation of the ratified treaty at the capital and in the provinces, but stipulate that the original shall be “deposited and sacredly guarded at Peking.” No such clause is in the English or French treaties.

The imperial decree as to the treaty revisions is very curious. It is dated in March, 1856, and is a singular illustration of the cleverness of the Chinese in all matters of diplomacy and business. In the American treaty of Wanghia was the only clause which provides for revision, and it is rather awkwardly worded, — awkwardly we mean for those who claim the right. It was in these words: —

“Article XXXIV. When the present convention shall have been definitively concluded, it shall be obligatory on both powers, and its provisions shall not be altered without grave cause; but inasmuch as the circumstances of the several ports of China open to foreign commerce are different, experience may show that inconsiderable modifications are requisite in those parts which relate to commerce and naviga-

tion; in which case the two governments will, at the expiration of twelve years from the date of said convention, treat amicably concerning the same by the means of suitable persons appointed to conduct such negotiation."

Now, unless the "grave cause" provision could be invoked, it is very clear that the right to revise at the expiration of twelve years extended only to "inconsiderable modifications" as to commerce and navigation; and no one who knows the acuteness of the Chinese could doubt that they would see this point and take advantage of it. Yeh did so in his correspondence with Mr. Reed, and the intercepted decree shows that he did so under instructions from head-quarters. We are tempted to make an extract from this, as singularly illustrative of the dexterity of Chinese fencing.

"The thing is plain. Now though the original treaties, under which the five ports were opened, did contain a provision that they should be revised, nothing more was meant than that, if, in the course of time, abuses came to exist, or points of difficulty or hindrance were discovered, as it was to be feared might be the case, there would be no objection to slight modifications. It was never contemplated that there could be any alteration in the substance of their conditions. The demands these barbarians made the year before last at Shanghae and Tientsin were so utterly inadmissible, that Tsung Hin and his colleagues, in their interview with them, rejected their propositions with rebuke, and the chiefs themselves, perceiving their own unreasonableness (the crookedness of their own reason, the badness of their cause), did not renew the controversy. They are now going to Shanghae, on the plea that the exclusiveness of the Kwangtung (government) is past bearing; but the Governor-General and Governor in Kiang-su being in no respect competent to the chief superintendence of barbarian business, and, of course, unable to accede to what they require, and their refusal certain to bring the barbarians to Tientsin, to the yet greater violation of what is right and proper, let Yeh Ming-chin inform himself of the particulars of the case, and hold in the barbarian securely. If the changes they require be merely on points of small significance, there will be no harm in his considering these with them, and forwarding a representation to us, (which received) some slight modifications may be adopted. If they repeat the extravagant demands of the year before last, he will speak plainly, repel their advances, and break off negotiations. It is absolutely incumbent on him, by an



equal employment of graciousness and awe, to put an end to this project of an expedition northwards altogether. Let him not show himself utterly inaccessible (*lit.*, steep and lofty, refuse to see them), lest his refusal to receive them be converted into matter of complaint. . . . . With gentle words, let him persuade them to sail to Kwangtung, and so prevent anything else coming of it. This is most important.

“Let copies of the original papers of Eliang and his colleague be supplied to Yeh Ming-chin for his information, and let this (decree) be forwarded at the rate of five hundred *li* a day, and communicated in confidence to the different authorities whom it concerns. Respect this.” — *Blue Book*, p. 152.

Such a document settles the question as to Yeh's acting under orders from his court. Our own belief is clear, that he did nothing — no act of what is called cruelty or repulsiveness — which was not prescribed to him, and which he did not faithfully report to the Imperial Cabinet.

Canton being thus in the possession of the allies, and a provisional government, half English and French and half Chinese being organized, the question of raising the blockade and allowing the resumption of trade became a very grave one. As far back as July, on his first arrival, Lord Elgin had felt the difficulty of his position with reference to neutral trade. “The great judgment and tact of the Admiral,” said he, “have alone prevented disputes of a very serious character from arising between the British government and the citizens of foreign states who are interested in the Canton trade. It is obvious that questions of much nicety must at times present themselves, when hostile operations are carried on, without any formal and acknowledged suspension of pacific relations.” In proportion to the lapse of time was the difficulty likely to increase. The decision of the question was embarrassed, too, by the conflicting interest of the British traders themselves, who, having bought teas at high prices in the north, were solicitous that the blockade should be maintained. They, in the true mercantile spirit, did not care a farthing whether it was a lawful blockade or not. Regarded at a distance, and from the platform of something like old-fashioned principle, it seems to us that there never was a greater violation of public law, or a worse precedent, than the irregular blockade of the Canton

River, from its inception to February, 1858, without a declaration of war. Every authority, ancient and modern, is against such action. From Blackstone to Blackwood every writer in England pronounced against it; for it so happens that one of the strongest condemnations of what was actually doing appeared in the columns of the Scotch periodical for June, 1857. The writer well says:—

“We maintain that the great constitutional formality of declaring war, understood and practised by every civilized nation, as a safeguard against the abominations of piracy and murder, has, in this case, been dispensed with, solely because such a declaration would necessitate the stoppage of trade at the other Chinese ports, to which, by treaty, we have access. Thus our government have introduced and are acting upon a new principle, which would have made the hair of Grotius stand on end,—namely, that it is lawful to prosecute hostilities with a province, division, or county of a kingdom, without reference to its other portions.”

Great Britain had denounced just such an irregular blockade, by the French, at Vera Cruz and Buenos Ayres, in 1838. There was everything against it, and yet no word of neutral complaint was raised, either by officials or individuals. As far back as November, 1857, the American house of Russell & Co. had protested; but after the affair of the Barrier Forts, and the burning of the factories, not a word more was said by them or any one else about it, and the truth is now revealed, that, so far were the Americans from seeking to perplex or annoy the allies, they were quite willing to incur a temporary inconvenience and loss, rather than throw any obstacle in the way of that policy of coercion on the Cantonese, which all agreed was inevitable. There seems every reason to suppose that the inducement for raising the blockade, as was done in February, and leaving the duties untouched, was a just appreciation by the allied Plenipotentiaries of the considerate conduct of the neutrals throughout, sharpened perhaps by what Mr. Cooke suggests, that a large portion of the 21,000,000 pounds of tea, liberated from the blockade, would be on its way to England,—each pound paying fifteen pence, or thereabout, into the Exchequer. We allude to this feature of affairs in the East, because, like everything else that our

countrymen at that time did, or left undone, it was made the subject of misrepresentation in England.

On the 10th of February, 1858, the blockade was raised, and pacific relations restored, with the exception of the retention in garrison of Canton and its suburbs. Mr. Cooke describes, in his lively, ill-natured way, what next occurred.

“In a former letter, I suggested the possibility that the early spring might see all the great civilized powers in co-operation. This has happened. England, France, America, and Russia are now in cordial accord. Ten days ago the American and Russian embassies were settled at Macao, doing nothing. Soon after the intention of raising the blockade was announced, it became known that Mr. Reed had made preparations for departure northwards, and it was suggested that his object was to be out of the way while points of difficulty arose, and to allow them to fructify during his absence. Again a little while, and they who were curious in watching symptoms noted that the Hon. F. Bruce, the Secretary to the British Embassy, was absent. It was not difficult to learn that he and the Secretary to the French Embassy proceeded in a gunboat to Macao, had an interview with Count Poutiatine, then, finding that Mr. Reed had left, and already was so far on his way as Hong Kong, started for Hong Kong, and, after seeing the American Minister, returned to Lord Elgin, at Canton. Following up this chain of public incidents,—which were known, or might have been known, to every man in the fleet,—we saw that after this interview Mr. Reed immediately returned to Macao, and set his house in order, gave up all thoughts of his immediate journey northwards, sent the Minnesota up the river as far as she could safely go, and went on to Canton in the Antelope, (a steamer of light draught which he had hired,) and visited Lord Elgin on board the Furious.

“About the same time, a special courier arrived from Count Poutiatine, and great activity was observable in the Russian embassy.”—*Cooke*, p. 383.

The meaning of all which is, that a perfect and thorough concert of peaceful diplomacy had at last occurred; that, without reserve or suspicion, each of the Plenipotentiaries had exchanged views with the others, the English and French taking the initiative, and the Americans and Russians cheerfully and cordially acquiescing; and that the measure of concert was a several and coincident appeal to the court of Peking for the appointment of a Plenipotentiary in the north,

and for a new chance for thorough pacification. There is among these papers addressed to the Supreme Council at Peking, of course, great similitude of views, though, as we understand the facts of the case, they were not mutually exchanged till after they were completed; and certain it is, none were more earnest in their appeal, nor more cordial in their expression of concert and sympathy, than those of the Russians and Americans.

The letters for Peking were at once forwarded to the Governor of Kiang-su, and intrusted to Mr. Oliphant of the English and M. de Contade of the French embassies, the American and Russian despatches being in charge of the United States Vice-Consul at Shanghae. These gentlemen reached Souchow without difficulty, and delivered the despatches to the Governor, who promised to send them to the capital.

As the end of March was designated as the time for meeting the new Imperial Commissioner at Shanghae, the Plenipotentiaries occupied the interval by visiting other places on their way north, Mr. Reed going to Manilla, and the Russian and English Ministers, having the command of small craft, stopping at the treaty ports. From Amoy, Lord Elgin wrote to the Foreign Office the only despatch which we find in the Blue Book on that great crime of modern commerce,—the Coolie trade to the West Indies,—from which we are tempted to make a single, but most impressive extract, showing in the darkest colors the enormity of this shameless traffic. At the time when this letter was written, the trade was carried on principally in English and American ships; but the latest accounts show that the French have engaged extensively in the trade, having in view the supply of labor to their African and West India colonies, and bloody affrays and riots at one of the treaty ports have been the first fruits of the experiment. Both Mr. Parker and Mr. Reed called the attention of our government to this hateful traffic,—the most atrocious slave-trade of our day; but we are not aware that anything has been done to arrest its progress, or to mitigate its admitted horrors. Lord Elgin's despatch is dated 6th March, 1858.

“I was furnished with some very harrowing details respecting the mode in which the Coolie trade is carried on. Mr. Burns, the mis-

sionary, confirmed the statement which I had noticed in the newspapers, to the effect that he had visited a shed on the island, where he found a party of seven emigrants, who had been discharged as unserviceable from an emigrant-ship, six of whom were already dead and in various stages of decomposition, while the single survivor was gasping for life among the corpses. The national propensity for gambling is, I understand, largely improved by the crimps, as a means of supplying this trade. A man gambles himself away, and the winner hands him over to the emigrant-ship for the sum which covers the debt of honor.

"Mr. Burns, in illustration of the working of this system, mentioned the case of a widow who invoked his assistance a few weeks ago. She was the mother of two children, a son of seventeen and a daughter much younger. The lad gambled himself away for eight dollars, and was handed over to the emigrant-ship. The mother, in despair, sold all that she possessed, her remaining child included; and, with five dollars thus painfully amassed, came to the island to rescue her son. But he was already gone, or the sum was insufficient, and the poor woman had to return, in an agony of distress, and bereaved of both her children. Although the subordinate agents in this trade are chiefly Chinamen, its horrors are set down to the account of foreigners, who carry it on.

"I inquired about female emigration. Here, as everywhere else where I have put the question, I was assured, in the most uncompromising terms, that no Chinawoman of respectability could be induced to emigrate. I was told that even the Cantonese coming to the Swatow district had difficulty in persuading their wives to accompany them. A rich Chinaman of Singapore had, however, during the course of the summer, conveyed to that port some hundred girls. They were, probably, purchased and intended for the Coolies in his employ. A batch of women had also been collected and exported to Cuba.

"On the other hand, I was informed that Chinamen, in the habit of seeking work at Singapore, sometimes brought back with them their Malay wives, leaving them in China, and returning without them.

"If this be not merely an exceptional case, it is a curious proof of the tenacity with which a Chinaman clings to his original home."—p. 224.

One other extract from Lord Elgin's wayside despatches we make, for the sake of the description of a part of China celebrated for its natural beauty.

"In closing these somewhat desultory remarks, I may observe that, with the exception perhaps of Chusan, I have as yet seen no place in

China which, in point of beauty of scenery, rivals Foochow. The Min River passes to the sea between two mountain ranges, which, wherever the torrents have not washed away every particle of earth from the surface, are cultivated by the industrious Chinese in terraces to their very summits. These mountain ranges close in upon its banks during the last part of its course : at one time confining it to a comparatively narrow channel, and at another suffering it to expand into a lake ; but in the vicinity of the Pagoda Island they separate, leaving between them the plain on which Foochow stands. This plain is diversified by hill and dale, and comprises the island of Nantai, which is the site of the foreign settlement. At the season of my visit, both hills and plain were chiefly covered with wheat ; but I was informed that the soil is induced, by irrigation and manure applied liberally, to yield in many cases, besides the wheat crop, two rice crops during the year. We walked with perfect freedom, both about the town and into the surrounding country. Nothing could be more courteous than the people of the villages, or more quaint than the landscape, consisting mainly of hillocks dotted with horseshoe graves, and monuments to the honor of virtuous maidens and faithful widows, surrounded by patches of wheat and vegetables. Kensal Green or Père la Chaise, cultivated as kitchen gardens, would not inaptly represent the general character of the rural districts of China which I have visited." — p. 225.

The diplomatic rendezvous at Shanghae was a failure. All that the Plenipotentiaries received was intelligence that a new Governor had been sent to Canton, in the place of Yeh, and an intimation that they must go thither to meet him. The Russian letter was not even answered, except through the American Minister, and the first actual breach of treaty obligation occurred on the part of the Chinese, in a refusal of the Supreme Council at the capital to correspond with the Ministers of the treaty powers, as they were expressly bound to do. The embassies at once proceeded to the north, reaching the anchorage of the Peiho in quick succession, and in this order, — Russian, English, American, and French.

Before venturing on an analysis of Lord Elgin's despatches, descriptive of the incidents which immediately afterward occurred, — and we are compelled to confine our attention almost exclusively to them, — we may note one or two special matters which these papers reveal, and which may account for the distrust which, it was surmised, was felt at the action of

the Americans and Russians. We know now, from Mr. Reed's express and earnest assertions since his return home, that there was no foundation for this feeling; but on looking through these papers, we can detect, as we have said, some little justification of it. It would seem that but a portion of the documents found in Yeh's palace had been rendered into English when the allies left Hong Kong, and that Mr. Wade, the British Chinese Secretary, on whom for the work of translation the main dependence was placed, occupied himself in deciphering them on the voyage. On reaching Shanghae on the 30th of March, Lord Elgin communicated to Lord Clarendon the translation of what he properly described as a most curious document, being the account of a conversation, in 1851, between the Emperor Hien Fung and an ex-Judge of Canton, on public affairs in the south. His Lordship said it was interesting, as throwing light on three points:—1. On the attention to business paid by the Emperor; 2. On the real nature of the apprehensions excited in the minds of the authorities in China by the spread of Christianity, which are clearly not religious, but political; and 3. On the relations subsisting between the Chinese functionaries and certain Americans resident at Hong Kong. Every one familiar with the history of our commercial intercourse with China knows who Howqua the father was, and who the living Howqua is, and that both father and son have been known to be uniformly friendly to Americans, and highly respected by them. Whether there are or have been closer connections of business, we have no means of knowing. If for no other reason, at least on account of the tendency we have thus described, Howqua has always been the object of British jealousy and suspicion. He took, as we have seen, an active part in remonstrating against the aggressions of 1856, and it was in consequence of an incipient negotiation between him and Messrs. Cunningham and Sturgis, that Admiral Seymour declared the first blockade. After the fall of Canton, Howqua had an interview with Mr. Wade on board of one of the men-of-war, and was regarded with much suspicion. It seems now, that the intercepted document found in Yeh's house, and translated just before Lord Elgin reached Shanghae, contained

the following dialogue, which, we confess, was adapted to excite some suspicion.

“ Q. Have you ever seen the barbarian buildings at Hong Kong?

“ A. Your servant has not seen them. Those in the foreign factories on the Canton River he has seen, but he has never been into them.

“ Q. Have you seen any barbarians or barbarian ships?

“ A. Your servant has seen a Flowery Flag (*sc.* American) steamer on the Canton River. There were barbarians on board the vessel, all dressed in white, both men and women. But she was too far off your servant's vessel for him to see them well.

“ Q. What nation is the Flowery Flag?

“ A. The American. The trade of the nation is very great; it is very rich and powerful, and yet not troublesome.

“ Q. How is it that America is rich and powerful, and yet not troublesome?

“ A. As a general rule, the outer barbarians trade, because their nature is so covetous. If one of them breaks the peace (makes trouble), the prosperity of the other's trade is marred. Thus the English are at this moment beggared; but if they were to break the peace, it is not on their own trade alone that injury would be inflicted: other nations are therefore certain to object to any outrageous proceeding on their part. Were they to commence a disturbance, the Americans would certainly be the last to assist them.

“ Q. Why would not the Americans assist them?

“ A. Your servant has been told that the Americans have business relations of great importance with Wu Sung-yau (Howqua), formerly a Hong merchant of Quang-tung; indeed, that they have had money of Wu. Every movement of the English barbarians is certain to be privately communicated to the family of Wu by the Americans, and Wu Sung-yau thereupon makes his private report to Seu and Yeh, who take precautionary measures accordingly. Thus, last year it was by a communication from the Americans that it was known that a man-of-war of the English barbarians was coming to the Peiho. Not that this shows any sincere friendship for us on the part of the Americans: it was simply that their desire for gain is strong, and that they were afraid that their trade would be disturbed by the act of the English.”  
—p. 234.

It was, perhaps, not very logical to suspect Mr. Reed of infidelity to the common cause, because eight years before the American merchants at Hong Kong used to tell Howqua the



gossip of the Queen's Road; but we can understand how the suspicion might arise, especially as coincident with this revelation was a most unexpected communication from the Russian Minister. When, in the month of November, Count Poutiatine reached the south of China, he evidently, in conversation with Lord Elgin, expressed resentment at the treatment he had received in the north, and, according to the despatch to the Foreign Office, now published, "was very decided in the expression of his opinion, that nothing could be done with the Chinese government unless pressure were brought to bear upon Peking itself, and that the use of vessels drawing so little water that they could navigate the Peiho would be the best means of making such pressure effective. The Mandarins on the spot, if I rightly understood him, had, in conversation with him, adverted with exultation to the fact that our ships of war could not perform this feat."

Count Poutiatine's letter to the Imperial Cabinet had been an earnest one. He felt aggrieved, and so expressed himself, at receiving no answer to his communication, except in the form of a message through Mr. Reed. It was well known that a large squadron, consisting of a frigate and several corvettes and gunboats, had sailed from Cronstadt for the East, and was hourly expected. Yet, at the very moment when this effective co-operation was counted on, and, unfortunately, just as the allies had been made aware of the reputed machinations of Howqua and the American merchants, a courier arrived at Shanghai from St. Petersburg, and the Russian Envoy at Shanghai addressed Lord Elgin the following note:—

"I had the honor of informing your Excellency some weeks ago that I expected fresh instructions from St. Petersburg. These supplementary instructions have just arrived by courier, and I consider it my duty to acquaint you with their purport.

"The Imperial Ministry is animated by the liveliest desire to see the present complications in China arrive at a happy and satisfactory conclusion, and directs me to lend my moral support to all demands of common interest which may be made by the Plenipotentiaries of other powers to the court of Peking. At the same time, the Ministry remains true to its first and absolutely pacific intentions; it would not have recourse to arms except as a last extremity, and it enjoins me

to abstain from all coercive measures against the Chinese government.

"I have further to acquaint you, that, by order of his Majesty the Emperor, my august master, I have taken the title of Imperial Commissioner and Commander-in-Chief of the squadron which is destined for the Chinese and Japanese seas." — p. 254.

There is no evidence among these documents of the alienation to which we have referred, nor could there be, if the rule of discreet suppression be strictly enforced ; but it is only fair to say, that these coincidences might easily have excited it.\* In his reply to the merchants of Shanghae, on the 29th, the date of Count Poutiatine's note, Lord Elgin said : —

"It is matter for me of the highest gratification to know that, in pursuing this policy of combined moderation and firmness, I can count not only on the hearty co-operation and active support of the representative of his Imperial Majesty the Emperor of the French, but also on the good-will and sympathy of the representatives of other great and powerful nations interested with ourselves in extending the area of Christian civilization, and multiplying those commercial ties which are destined to bind the East and West together in the bonds of mutual advantage." — p. 239.

The Russian Minister, on the receipt of his new instructions, sent orders — for he was both Admiral and diplomatist — to Hong Kong and Angier to the coming armament, and went northward himself in the little steamer *Amerilla*, reaching the place of meeting first, and, as usual with his available craft, anchoring closer in than any one else. The French Minister, who was the last to arrive, made his appearance on the 17th of April.

Almost coincidently with this reunion at the north came the news of the shipwreck of Lord Palmerston's China ministry, on the sunken rock of the Conspiracy Bill, and the accession to power of those who had condemned everything that had been done or attempted in the East by their predecessors. But the new ministers did not care to signalize their advent to power by meddling with distant diplomacy, which, if successful, could

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\* It will be observed, that a portion of nearly every one of Lord Elgin's despatches is withheld.

not damage them, and the frustration of which by their act could do them no good. Accordingly, on the 27th of February, Lord Malmesbury wrote, approving the action at Canton. On the 25th of March he wrote again, expressing his gratification at the concurrent action of the neutral Plenipotentiaries, adding, however, that "her Majesty's government trust that the effect of this may be an early cessation of the present state of hostility in China, and the renewal of friendly intercourse where it has been interrupted." This must have been received about the time of the attack on the forts. In this connection we may observe that distance is a great protection to a foreign minister. Not only does it compel him to act on his own responsibility, but it frees him from interference and instruction from home. It was shown in this instance. We have seen that it was a part of Lord Elgin's policy, most creditable in every way to him, to maintain the semblance at least of Chinese authority in the captured city of Canton, and to allow the duties to go into the local treasury. This does not seem to have been acceptable in England; for, on the 2d of July, Lord Malmesbury, instigated doubtless by the complaints of parties at Hong Kong, all of whom, with a perverse unanimity characteristic of that wretched community, were adverse to anything done or suggested by Lord Elgin, wrote:—

"Her Majesty's government consider that the present mixed government of Canton, composed of Commissioners named on the part of England and France, and of Mandarins, is wholly inefficient for all objects of administration and policy; and that, as I have said before, it should now be replaced by a military government acting according to the rules of martial law."—p. 262.

And again on the 8th:—

"I have to state to your Excellency, that her Majesty's government consider that, during the occupation of Canton by the allied forces, the proceeds of the custom-house, after defraying the expense of collection and providing for the expenses of the local government, and for those of any police arrangements which may be maintained by the allies, independently of the local authorities, should be taken possession of by the allied Commissioners, and held by them until the manner in which they are to be definitively appropriated shall be determined.

“Her Majesty’s government are of opinion that the Chinese custom-house should be temporarily administered by the allies, and that duties should be collected on their behalf and by their authority, or by officers appointed by them for that purpose. They consider that, so long as the relations between the allies and the Chinese empire continue in their present unsettled state, they would not be justified in allowing the Chinese government to draw from a city in the occupation of the allied forces pecuniary resources by which to carry on the contest, especially as that occupation, by the security which it affords to commerce, and by opening to foreign trade the port of Canton, alone enables the Chinese government to collect any duties at all there.” — *Ibid.*

And again on the 9th of September : —

“As much uneasiness appears to prevail at Canton, and as the present mixed government of Canton is, as I observed in my above-mentioned despatch, wholly inefficient for all objects of administration and policy, her Majesty’s government are of opinion, in case you should not yet have acted on that despatch, in conjunction with Baron Gros, that the course therein indicated should no longer be delayed, and that Canton should be forthwith placed under martial law.” — p. 335.

Fortunately for the general interests, none of these instructions were received in time to do any harm ; and we observe that Lord Elgin, when they reached him, simply acknowledged them without comment, and, as we understand the matter, without obeying them. We doubt very much if the Americans would have paid duties into an Anglo-French custom-house at Whampoa, and are quite sure that any attempt to make them do so, or to embarrass their trade because they did not, would have been attended with serious consequences.\*

On the 23d of April, intelligence was received, informally, by the Russian Minister, that officers of high rank had arrived on the coast to confer with the foreigners ; and on the next

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\* Lord Elgin left China without determining the site of the new factories at Canton, mainly because he could not persuade the British merchants to unite in any selection. He referred it wholly to them, and they, as usual, quarrelled among themselves. In the mean time our countrymen, Messrs. Russell & Co., claiming a right under a lease from Howqua, went quietly to work on the old site, and, we presume, practically settled the matter.

day, letters from all were sent on shore, in armed boats, to announce the fact of the advent of the Ministers. The English, and we presume the French notes, were to the effect, that if, at the expiration of six days, an accredited Plenipotentiary did not present himself, this pacific overture would be considered as rejected, and ulterior measures resorted to. We take it for granted, that the neutral notifications did not contain even an implied threat, unless it were that they should feel at liberty to approach nearer the capital.

The first agents who presented themselves, but who did not pretend to have any adequate powers, or indeed any powers at all, were the same who had met the Western Ministers in 1854, Tsunglun and Wu. They were not allowed an interview, but the fact of their arrival, as a symptom of relenting, or the delay of the naval reinforcements, had the effect of postponing for a short time any decisive action. Beside all this, the French and English Envoys had information in their possession which admonished them to act with great reserve, and to insist on every preliminary evidence of authority in the way of credentials. The Blue Book contains, at length, the very remarkable documents found in Canton, to which we referred in our last number, being the reports to the Emperor of the various diplomatic attempts heretofore made and frustrated, and especially those of 1854-55. They are very curious, as illustrative of the perverse mendacity of the Chinese public men, of their servile obedience to the imperial authority, and of the severity of the power they revere. We have room for but a few citations. In a memoir, in 1854, from Hu-nai-chau, a public man of high literary merit, and of great family influence and connection, he had thus memorialized : —

“To come to another matter : towards the end of the 5th moon, the English barbarians were very eager to drive away the Shanghai rebels ; whither, the troops were to ask. Their object was not comprehensible at the time. It has since been discovered, that, according to the statement of persons in the barbarian offices on the Yang-king Pang (the foreign factories or consulates), their chief, Sir John Bowring, had been informed of an attempt about to be made by the soldiers of Russia upon Hong Kong, the garrison of which place hardly amounted to a thousand men, — a force insufficient, even with the as-

sistance of the five ships brought by the Admiral, for its defence against the Russian troops ; and that he wanted to complete his strength with the rebels, and so show a better front. As Kir-hanga and the other officers did observe at the time that this chief appeared perturbed and excited, it would seem that the report was not altogether without foundation. The other day the English chief said himself, that the steamer had brought news of a victory in Turkey, and of the capture of two Russian vessels, and he seemed to be at his ease.

“A communication came yesterday from the English chief, proposing a conference on business at the barbarian office on the 9th of the moon, and your servant has written to agree to this. Not that, capricious and inconsistent as (he knows) these barbarians to be, he is going to exceed in concession ; but it is his duty, in every case, to weigh well the advantage and disadvantage of this or that order of proceeding, and *should there be any measure positively beneficial to China, and at the same time practicable, without violation of the law, he would assuredly not presume to abide in the smallest degree by standing prejudices.*”

About the same time Eliang, Governor-General of the Two-Kwang, had memorialized the throne as to Mr. McLane's visit to Kwanshan, and on the 15th of July the Emperor fulminated a decree of degradation against poor Hu-nai-chau for having been guilty of the great crime of saying that he might be willing to concede to the foreigner what should be positively beneficial to China ! As to the rumor of a war with Russia, the Emperor summarily dismisses it as a Hong Kong *canard*. “It was,” says he, “on the 16th of the 3d moon (14th of April) that Bowring arrived in Canton ; yet on the 25th of the 5th moon he comes up to Shanghae in a ship of war, and on the 23d detaches the barbarian chief Medhurst with a steamer to Chin-Kiang. How comes it, if they really have a war with Russia, that the English can be jaunting it about in China. Everything shows that they are concealing a dangerous purpose, — a heart of war and danger.” The decree of degradation proceeds : —

“From a succession of memorials from Hu-nai-chau regarding the rebels and the English chief at Shanghae, the awkwardness and weakness of his conduct become more and more apparent. He states that the chief had appointed a day for an interview with him, and that, ‘in any measure that might be of positive benefit to China, he will assuredly not presume in the least to abide by standing prejudices’ ; that

is to say, in fact, that he has been perfectly prepared long since to make concessions. We have already degraded this Governor, and we command Eliang and Kir-hanga, in the event of his having been duped into any extravagant or unlawful engagement by the barbarians, to repudiate it utterly, in plain language, and not to be misled by their absurdity. Let them at the same time desire them to proceed to Kwangtung, and there abide the decision of Yeh Ming-chin."

Here too was the record of the frustration of Western diplomacy in 1854, when Mr. Medhurst and Mr. Parker landed at Taku and held their first conference. It is thus described:—

"Acting on these, your slaves exhorted them for several hours, trying every means to direct them in the way they should go, and employing in all they said an equal proportion of austerity and mildness (*lit.*, the hard and the soft). The barbarians, however, pertinaciously adhering, with consistent disingenuousness, to their request that representation be made to the throne, a special danger presented itself; namely, that unless some latitude (*lit.*, tether) were allowed them, and a representation to the throne indulgently conceded them, these barbarians, although not presuming to dash up the river, might sail away south, and, instead of submitting, convert their dismissal into a ground of complaint. With the responsibility of an affair so important as the present resting upon them, your slaves dare not retain, be it ever so little, the standing prejudice against any concession whatever. The character of the barbarians is, notwithstanding, so extraordinarily malicious, that precaution against their advancement to other irregular pretensions will still be indispensable."

Again, at a later date:—

"Farther, in the *shin* watch (4 P. M.) of the 8th instant (29th October), just as your slaves had despatched their replies to Medhurst and the other, these barbarians requested an interview. Your slave Waukien declined to receive them, on the plea that certain expressions in their communication had been offensive and impertinent; but your slave Shwang-jui and your servant Tsien Hin-ho went forward to meet them, and lectured them upon the obligations of duty. Medhurst and Parker hung down their heads, having nothing to rejoin, and apologized for their error. They further observed, that, as a high officer was to be at Tientsin immediately, to look into the questions pending, there would now be peace between us; and though they should die, they

should not care. They seemed greatly ashamed, and their language was most respectful.”\*

But a still more important document was the report made to his master by Tsunglun, the Plenipotentiary of 1854, who was now in attendance to play the same game with the new-comers. Thus forewarned, Lord Elgin and Baron Gros were, in our opinion, quite justified in their attitude of stern reserve and exaction before the advance on Tientsin. For reasons no doubt adequate, but on which the published correspondence throws no light, or from inadvertency, these papers, as we have before said, were not communicated to the neutral Ministers. A new Plenipotentiary, Tau, the Governor-General of the province of Chikli, had made his appearance, and with him Mr. Reed and Count Poutiatine were making “the experiments” at pacification, which Lord Elgin in one place refers to, and with which, it seems, he was in no way discontented, though anticipating little good from them. It was at one of his interviews that Count Poutiatine was able to deter the Chinese from the insanity of firing on the English gunboats, which, rather unceremoniously and within the six days of respite, crossed the bar and anchored close to the forts. In truth, the neutral Ministers spared no effort to induce the Chinese to yield, and to avert by timely concession the catastrophe which was impending. Lord Elgin expressly thanked them. On the 4th of May, the allies, to meet the views of the neutrals, allowed six days more. It was, in point of fact, still further prolonged; but on the 17th, news reached the forts that the Emperor had refused the new powers and the visit to Peking, and on the 19th of May, 1858, the forts were summoned and taken by assault.

It was a short, sharp conflict, with heavy loss to the Chinese and comparatively little to the assailants, the French suffering more than the English. The Chinese had taken no precautions in staking the river, and to prevent reconnoissances. French captains, with their eyes wide open, had carried diplo-

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\* We note a curious rhetorical analogy in one of these papers. One of the memorialists speaks of “this autumn of troubles,” — “a classical expression,” says the translator, “like ‘the winter of our discontent.’”



matic notes up to the line of intrenchment, boats were busily engaged sounding all around and taking their angles, and the admirals actually landed on the jetty during the negotiations, and made their observations within musket-shot of the batteries. But when the fight began, the Chinese stood steadily at their guns, and never flinched till the storming parties were landed, when the wild huzza of the sailors was too much for their nerves. The dead and wounded were plentifully strewn among the guns and across the plain, where they were shot down in flight. At the door of Tau's head-quarters was found an official of high military rank with his throat cut, either by his own hand in despair, or by orders from his incensed superior. It was altogether a sad and sickening sight. Among the voluntary spectators of this easy conquest, as we have heard, was Mr. Bruce, then Lord Elgin's chief secretary, and now his successor, destined within little more than a year to witness a ghastly contrast, — not dying and dead Chinamen, uncared for by their Christian conquerors, but nearly five hundred of the bravest and most gallant of his own countrymen, slaughtered and mutilated, and but a remnant, recoiling in disgrace before the worthless battlements of Taku, and owing their escape to the very neutrals who, a year before, were the objects of so much and so unjust suspicion. The official despatches lately published, descriptive of the disaster of 1859, are deplorable revelations of the worst sort of incapacity, and are in painful contrast to those in which Lord Elgin announced a bloodless victory. There is one idea which a perusal of these documents suggests, — reading them, as we now do, in the glare of the recent conflict, — to which we refer in justice to a gallant and unfortunate man, Admiral Hope. He no doubt remembered a year ago, when his predecessor, Sir Michael Seymour, — than whom a braver and more considerate man never breathed, — was the object of diplomatic criticism and authoritative newspaper reprehension because he hesitated to attack these very forts, and in fact refused to do so till his arrangements were completed. "I trust," wrote Lord Elgin to the Foreign Office in 1858, "that the success thus achieved will encourage the admirals to prosecute with vigor those measures which I have been urging upon them for

some time past.” And on the day before the Admiral had written : “ The Chinese having completed their defences, and being fully prepared, this operation will be more likely to produce a good moral effect on the Chinese government, than if we had attacked them before they had made any such preparations.” There was evidently a difference of opinion, but the military man was firm. Who can say that Admiral Hope would have made the attack of last June, if left to his own unprompted judgment ? Or who can doubt what would have been his doom, had he, like Admiral Seymour, refused to be goaded into action before he was ready, when, as Mr. Bruce now says, in his apologetic despatch of the 13th of July, 1859, “ if Admiral Hope had expressed doubts on the subject, they would not have been shared by his squadron, who have had most experience of warfare in China,” — in other words, had the Admiral doubted, when, as the result shows, doubts were wise, he would have been sneered at by every scribbling subordinate in his fleet, pooh-poohed at by those who claim to have had experience in Chinese warfare, and stung by that swarm of ill-natured and unprincipled writers who contribute to the English press, — the same men who, a year ago, slandered Sir Michael Seymour, and now are innocently lecturing before lyceums and geographical societies ? He unfortunately acted without hesitation, and in his anguish must find poor consolation in knowing that, if the means at his command were insufficient to justify a bold line of policy, Mr. Bruce “ shares the responsibility with him ” ! It is a wretched affair altogether.\*

The forts taken and the junks in the way stranded or burnt, on the 29th of May, 1858, Lord Elgin and Baron Gros in an English gunboat, and Mr. Reed and Count Poutiatine on board the Russian armed steamer *Amerilla*, pushed up this mysterious Peiho River, and at daybreak of the 30th were at anchor

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\* Admiral Hope, in his manly despatch to the Admiralty, does not talk about “ Chinese treachery ” ; for he knows that there was none, and that he blew up a boom the night before the batteries fired a gun. But he says, showing that he had been misled by those who had experience of Chinese warfare, “ Had the opposition been that usual in Chinese warfare, there is little doubt the place would have been successfully carried.”

off the city of Tientsin, at the point of confluence of the Grand Canal and the navigable natural stream.

"The sun," says Lord Elgin, "dropped below the horizon shortly after we entered the mouth of the river. A bright moonlight succeeded. We proceeded steadily on our way, and at about 4 A. M. on the 30th of May dropped anchor in the heart of the suburb of Tientsin, at the point of junction of the Grand Canal and the Tientsin or Peiho River: in a most favorable position, therefore, for putting an arrest on the movements of the grain-junks which bear tribute to Peking.

"The banks of the river between Tientsin and the sea appear to be low and flat. Its channel is scooped out in soft mud. Unlike the Canton River, it has no creeks or affluents. Except that in the upper part it is somewhat tortuous, the navigation is singularly safe and easy.

"It is at any rate a fact of some interest and significance, that the Plenipotentiaries of Great Britain, France, Russia, and the United States reached this point from the sea, after a night voyage of about ten hours' duration, without encountering mishap of any kind whatsoever." — p. 312.

What a contrast, one may well observe, between this scene, — this advent of armed vessels, carrying no ensigns of tribute, but independent national flags, indicating the presence of ambassadors claiming a right to negotiate on terms of equality, — what a contrast with what had happened on this very spot twice before, and within the memory of at least one living man, Sir George Staunton, who as a boy had accompanied Lord Macartney, and who has died within the last few months! Sir John Davis and the present Earl Amherst, and perhaps others, are yet living, who remember those ancient days of degradation. It was at or near Tientsin (literally rendered, the Seat of Heaven) that Lord Macartney's state carriage was unpacked, and the Chinese were thunderstruck at finding the coachman riding in front, and on a higher seat than the ambassador; and that Lord Amherst had many of his dismal discussions about ceremony, in which, if we mistake not, he agreed to knock his head nine times on the ground in the imperial presence, provided the Emperor would do the same thing before a picture of the Prince Regent. It was here that a British Earl, only thirty years ago, did bow nine times before a yellow screen, and that, as we read, Sir George Staunton

“happily suggested,” by way of compromise, that young Amherst (we presume the present peer) should rehearse the Kotoo before his father. Now, all was changed, terribly changed for Chinese *prestige*. One old man, at a ferry near Tientsin, was met by the strangers, who said he recollected the Amherst Embassy ; and now he looked (if he chose to open his eyes and turn them that way) on how different a scene ! In the river, and transversely in the canal, now, alas ! nearly dried up, lay at anchor two French and four English despatch and gun boats, and one Russian steamer, — all heavily armed and filled with men. On shore, in a rather picturesque temple once consecrated by the august presence of the old Emperor Kienlung, now surrounded with sentries and guarded by cannon, resided Lord Elgin and Baron Gros. Below, at a little distance, on the right bank of the river, were to be seen the “flowery” flag of America, and the Blue Cross of Russia, indicating the less ambitious and unguarded residences of the neutral Ministers. No less marked were what we may call the moral or political contrasts thus exhibited. Here were the ambassadors, within sixty or seventy miles of the great shrine before which Chinese officials and tributary envoys bowed and trembled ; and yet who troubled his head, in this crowd of intrusive barbarians, about the Kotoo, or the yellow screen ? It was, we all recollect, an idea of the first Napoleon, that Lord Amherst made a mistake as to the Kotoo, and that he ought to have so far deferred to the ceremonial of the court as to perform it. It may well be doubted if the nephew Napoleon would have sanctioned such a prostration by Baron Gros. Lord Elgin agreed, it seems, if admitted to court, to kneel on one knee, and when the Chinese demanded two knees, “it was firmly resisted.” Mr. Reed peremptorily refused to kneel at all, when the Emperor’s letter to the President, enclosed in a yellow case, written on yellow paper, and placed on a yellow table, with imperial awe-inspiring dragons all around, was delivered to him, and the Chinese found no fault with the refusal. Thus passed away, apparently into contempt and desuetude, the Kotoo, and all questions of ceremony, eclipsed and pushed aside by the graver and more practical questions which Western diplomacy was forcing on the attention of the Chinese.

We now proceed to the history of those negotiations as revealed in this published correspondence, ending in the British treaty of Tientsin, and we desire distinctly to be understood, that, in abstaining strictly from any reference to the action of our Minister, we do so because his correspondence has not been officially made public, and without access to that there would be great liability to error and injustice. We desire to show what Lord Elgin did, and how he did it, from his own revelations.

On the day after the Plenipotentiaries arrived at Tientsin, the news came that two of the highest functionaries of the empire had been appointed to treat with them, and were on their way from the capital. These were Kweiliang, one of the four chief secretaries of state, in the civil service, the second Mandarin in the empire, a man of advanced age and most distinguished character, and Hwashana, the president of the Board of Civil Office, the most important tribunal in China. The prompt selection of officers of this rank showed the views the court had at length taken as to the gravity of the crisis. On the 3d of June they reached Tientsin, and, in order to meet the difficulty which had occurred with their predecessor Tau, announced themselves as "Plenipotentiary Ministers, with full powers." On the three succeeding days the official interviews took place. They were rather ceremonial than otherwise; those of the English and French Ministers being less friendly than those of the neutrals, there being found, or supposed to be found, some real or technical defect in the authority which was produced. In the minute of Lord Elgin's interview, it is said that "his Lordship rose immediately, and the Commissioners, after a few vain endeavors, by words and gestures, to retain him, accompanied him to his chair." In the eleven days which followed, as these official papers show, there was on the part of the English and French—but more particularly the former—a progressive series of threats and words, and sometimes acts of compulsion, which scarcely left the Chinese Plenipotentiaries any option but to submit; during which time, it will be remembered, the American and Russian negotiations were advancing quietly and decorously, and were completed, as the dates show, at the very time when the affairs of the

others were most critical and uncertain. The Russian treaty was signed on the 13th of June, — the day after there was an overt act of violence, — and the American on the 18th.

We have neither room nor inclination to discuss the question of public law as to the obligation of compacts extorted by duress, and are quite willing to admit that no such rule as affects private contracts can be expected to extend to public ones ; but here, as in the matter of the irregular blockades, to which we have referred, the unprovoked hostilities at the forts, (for it is begging the question to say they were necessary,) with the appearance of a terrific force, and, as we shall presently see, its employment at Tientsin, make this question of obligation on the Chinese a very doubtful one, at least in point of morality. Let us, however, advert for a moment to the sad episode of Keying's appearance on the scene, and his discomfiture and disgrace. These papers throw little light on the mystery of this incident. Keying arrived on the 9th of June, being, if not the bearer, at least the harbinger of the letter from the Emperor to the President of the United States. Neither Lord Elgin nor Baron Gros was willing to see the old man ; but Messrs. Wade and Lay, the English interpreters, were deputed to meet him. Their report is among these papers, and describes the interview in terms of great disparagement as to one whose principal fault was that he was old and decrepit. It thus closes : —

“Keying is now seventy-two years of age, and apparently much broken, walking and even standing with difficulty. He is, to judge from appearances, in little favor at court, and is only revived as a person acceptable to foreigners, and experienced in cajoling them. His conversation was a perfect clatter of compliments and moral sentiments, delivered with that mixed air of patronage and conciliation, which, it may be observed, was considered by the Mandarins earlier in contact with us as the true means of soothing and bridling the barbarian.”

One may be permitted to remark, that such comments, and the imputation of such motives, sound oddly as coming from those whose business as interpreters was to stick closely to their function, — to tell the tale that was told to them without gloss or criticism. But it was the evident determination in the English councils, that Keying should not be listened to or toler-

ated, the reason or pretext being the intercepted letter found at Canton, written by him thirteen years before. This paper is now printed, and we confess — reading it with no other bias than a disposition to think well of a public man who once stood high in the estimation of the West, and comparing it with the other confidential papers which came to light — we are unable to see its enormity. It is full of that odd phraseology and expressed disparagement of foreigners which ought, one would think, to excite a smile rather than a frown.\* For example : —

“He calls to mind, however, that it was in the 7th moon of the 22d year (August, 1842), that the English barbarians were pacified. The Americans and French have successively followed, in the summer and autumn of this year (1844).

“In this period of three years barbarian matters have been affected by many conditions of change; and in proportion as these have been various in character has it become necessary to shift ground, and to adopt alterations in the means by which they were to be conciliated and held within range. They must be dealt with justly, of course, and their feelings thus appealed to; but, to keep them in hand, stratagem (or diplomacy) is requisite.

“In some instances a direction must be given them, but without explanation of the reason why. In some, their restlessness can only be neutralized by demonstrations which dissolve their suspicions. In some, they have to be pleased and moved to gratitude, by concession of intercourse on a footing of equality; and in some, before a result can be brought about, their falsity has to be blinked; nor must an estimate (of their facts) be pressed too far.

“Bred and born in the foreign regions beyond its boundary, there is much in the administration of the Celestial Dynasty that is not perfectly comprehensible to the barbarians; and they are continually putting forced constructions on things of which it is difficult to explain to them the real nature. . . . .

“The meal which the barbarians eat together they call the dinner. It is a practice they delight in to assemble a number of people at a great entertainment, at which they eat and drink together. When your

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\* Lord Elgin in a despatch of the 20th of September, informing the government that he had made the Chinese retract the word “barbarian” in an imperial decree, candidly says: “It is necessary to keep the Chinese up to the mark on this point, though I confess that I very much doubt whether they have any other term which conveys to the Chinese population the idea of a foreigner.”

slave has given a dinner to the barbarians at the Bogue or Macao, their chiefs and leaders have come to the number of from ten to twenty or thirty; and when, in process of time, your slave has chanced to go to barbarian residences or barbarian ships, they have, in their turn, seated themselves round in attendance upon him, striving who should be foremost in offering him meat and drink. To gain their good-will he could not do otherwise than share their cup and spoon.

"Another point, it is the wont of the barbarians to make much of their women. Whenever their visitor is a person of distinction, the wife is sure to come out to receive him.

"In the case of the American barbarian Parker, and the French barbarian Sagréné, for instance, both of these have brought their foreign wives with them, and when your slave has gone to their barbarian residences on business, these foreign women have suddenly appeared and saluted him. Your slave was confounded and ill at ease, while they, on the contrary, were greatly delighted at the honor done them. The truth is, as this shows, that it is not possible to regulate the customs of the Western states by the ceremonial of China; and to break out in rebuke, while it would do nothing towards their enlightenment (*lit.*, to cleave their dulness), might chance to give rise to suspicion and ill-feeling. . . . .

"To come to their governments, though every state has one, there are rulers, male or female, holding office permanently, or for the time being.

"With the English barbarians, for instance, the ruler is a female; with the Americans and French, a male. The English and French ruler reigns for life; the American is elected by his countrymen, and is changed once in four years; and when he retires from his throne, he takes rank with the people (the non-official classes).

"Their official designations are also different in the case of each nation. To represent these, for the most part, they appropriate (*lit.*, filch) Chinese characters, boastfully affecting a style to which they have no claim, and assuming the airs of a great power. That they should conceive that they thereby do honor to their rulers is no concern of ours, while, if the forms observed towards the dependencies (of China) were to be prescribed as the rule in their case, they would certainly not consent, as they neither accept the Chinese computation of time, nor receive your Majesty's patent of royalty to fall back to the rank of Cochin China or Lew Chew. And with people so uncivilized as they are, blindly unintelligent in styles and modes of address, a tenacity of forms in official correspondence, such as would duly place the superior above and the inferior below, would be the cause of a fierce alter-



cation (*lit.*, a rising of the tongue and a blistering of the lips); the only course in that case would be to affect to be deaf to it (*lit.*, to be as though the ear-loppet stopped the ear); personal intercourse would then become impossible, and not only this, but an incompatibility of relations would immediately follow, of anything but advantage, certainly, to the essential question of conciliation. Instead, therefore, of a contest about unsubstantial names, which can produce no tangible result, (it has been held) better to disregard these minor details in order to the success of an important policy." — *Blue Book*, pp. 175–177.

It may have been politic enough in the Western Ministers to refuse to allow Keying to interfere with the action of the accredited Commissioners, by refusing to recognize him; but to attribute to this old man all the evil agency which was imputed to him seems very irrational, and when we remember that the effect of it was to precipitate his downfall, and to send him to the dungeon, to the scaffold, or suicide, it is very sad. On the day, or the day but one, before Keying arrived, Mr. Lay, the English interpreter, had a private conference with Pieu, the Chinese "Secretary of Legation." It is a very odd and characteristic narrative, through which "crop out," on the part of the Western diplomat, some very significant facts.

"Mr. Lay believed that, viewing the present condition of the Chinese empire, the improvement of her relations with foreign powers would be of substantive benefit to all classes in China; that foreign powers had no intention to appropriate any portion of her dominions, and Mr. Lay did not doubt that the four powers would readily bind themselves by a formal engagement to abstain from the prosecution of any such design. If China were wise, she would make Great Britain her friend, and in that case she would have nothing to fear from other powers. Great Britain was the most influential of the nations concerned.

"Mr. Lay asked the secretaries if they had heard of the Russian war. They replied, 'Yes; you would not allow Russia to appropriate little Turkey.' Mr. Lay pointed out that they might see from this that a foreign nation could not always commit what acts of aggression she pleased, and that if one nation advanced unreasonable demands, other nations could interpose to restrain her.

"Pieu reiterated what he had before said, that the Emperor would rather risk war than accede to the appointment of foreign Ministers at the court.

"Mr. Lay replied, that they had better try war then, but they might be sure that the Emperor would have finally to yield; that he had better do so with a good grace now, than take the chance of *having his capital filled by foreign troops at a future period*. So long as the Commissioners continued of their present mind, further discussion would be manifestly of no avail. Mr. Lay, therefore, would like a few minutes' conversation with Kweiliang himself on the subject of the resident Minister.

"Pieu said he would see his Excellency, and ascertain whether this would be agreeable to him. . . . .

"Pieu prayed Mr. Lay to think this point over (of permanent residence), as it might perhaps be so arranged, and we could then keep the other powers in check. Pieu suggested also that the British Minister and his suit should, except on grand occasions, ordinarily wear the Chinese costume, so as not to excite the alarm of the people, and begged Mr. Lay to think this point over also. This, Mr. Lay, with difficulty restraining a strong inclination to laughter, promised to do."

On the 9th, Mr. Lay saw Kweiliang in person, and we beg our readers, in this and the succeeding citation, to note the helpless struggle of the Chinese on the points which to them were vital, and the progress of threats of coercion, some of which we emphasize.

"The conversation that ensued was of a desultory kind. Kweiliang at first *pleaded for more time*: Mr. Lay replied, that the propositions had already been before his government for months. Kweiliang then read over each Article, putting general questions upon each, *seriatim*. This being accomplished, Mr. Lay asked whether his Excellency was prepared to concede them. He said that he would see on the following day; and *still pleaded for a little time*. Mr. Lay said, that he trusted his Excellency would let him carry back a definite answer at once; no good could be gained by further postponement; *troops, as he had been before informed, were on their way to Tientsin*; and, unless he was prepared to return an answer in the negative, he had much better, on every consideration, answer in the affirmative at once. Mr. Lay had exhausted the subject, and he felt that he really could not return again to Lord Elgin without something definite, whether in the way of acquiescence or denial. He must, therefore, pray his Excellency to give him an immediate answer.

"Kweiliang on this withdrew, as he said, to consult his colleague. He returned in a quarter of an hour, saying that he acceded to the five propositions.

"Mr. Lay said he would communicate this to Lord Elgin, but that the information had better be conveyed to his Lordship in the form of a letter. Kweiliang asked Mr. Lay if he would visit him again on the following day, to assist in the preparation of the letter to Lord Elgin. This Mr. Lay promised to do.

"Upon the two remaining points still unsettled, Mr. Lay inquired his Excellency's views, remarking that, as a matter of course, Lord Elgin *must go to Peking, must have audience of the Emperor*, and kneel on one knee only; and further, that a building *must* be at the same time selected for the permanent accommodation of the Minister who might be appointed to reside at the capital. Mr. Lay had proceeded so far, Kweiliang saying, 'Yes, yes,' at the close of each sentence, when Pieu interposed, and violently insisted upon the necessity of prostration in the Emperor's presence, and combated moreover, with great earnestness, the notion of our going to Peking just at present.

"Kweiliang immediately adopted his line, and maintained that, at all events, our Ambassador must kneel upon both knees in the presence of his sovereign. This was firmly resisted, on the ground that the kneeling on one knee was the most respectful form of obeisance amongst us; that Great Britain was not a subject state of China, and her representative could not, therefore, perform an act which would be derogatory to the dignity of his nation."

On the next day there was more pressure and violence.

"Upon his arrival, Mr. Lay was informed that the draft of the letter was with Keying, to whom it had been sent for consideration, but that it would be back in the course of the morning, and Mr. Lay should have it by three o'clock.

"Some time before this hour, Twau, one of the secretaries, appeared with the letter for Mr. Lay's final perusal. Mr. Lay, with the approval of Kweiliang, struck out a few characters which had been inserted here and there since the previous day, and it was sent back to be copied at once. An hour or more elapsed, and Keying arrived. He proceeded to talk in the strain he had adopted the day before, insisting that there was no necessity for any immediate hurry in the matter of the letter: it could well wait awhile; a few days could make no difference, and, besides, the 'kwan-fang' (seal) had not yet been received. His conversation of the previous day considered, it was impossible not to attribute this continued evasion of their engagement by the Commissioners to Keying's intervention. Mr. Lay repeatedly explained to him, that he did not consider himself authorized to enter into discussion regarding Lord Elgin's correspondence with the Commissioners with

him, and at last, having no other escape from his overwhelming familiarity and verbosity, withdrew to the garden, where he was met by the Commissioner Hwashana.

"Hwashana informed Mr. Lay that the letter could not be sent to-day ; but that another letter, asking for time to consider the propositions, had been prepared, which he begged Mr. Lay to carry away.

"Mr. Lay declined to do anything of the sort ; that no answer would he carry away, but in the negative or affirmative ; and *raising his voice, Mr. Lay said that the Commissioners had now, after several days, kept him waiting for seven hours ; that they had distinctly promised to give him the letter by three o'clock, and now at eight o'clock they endeavored to put him off again by a subterfuge ; that the Commissioners had violated their pledged word ; that Mr. Lay should inform Lord Elgin of what had passed ; and that it was clear to him that, until the British troops were inside the city of Peking, their treatment of British authorities and British affairs would continue unchanged.*" — pp. 317 – 324.

Here, there was a distinct threat conveyed in loud and violent language, that, unless such a letter as Lord Elgin had dictated should be written, a British army should march on Peking ; and it was not at all surprising that on the next day the exacted letter of reluctant promise was written, which Lord Elgin, in a despatch to Lord Malmesbury, well describes "as the fruit of Mr. Lay's communications." But even in this we are unable to find the express promise of permission for a British Minister to reside at Peking, which has been claimed. The language is this : —

"To the permanent residence of a Plenipotentiary Minister of her Britannic Majesty, there is properly no objection. Unfortunately a collision has occurred with the vessels of war of your Excellency's government, and as the dignity of ours would perhaps be outraged by the Minister's proceeding at once to Peking, his visit might, we think, be postponed. Her Majesty's Plenipotentiary might live in Tientsin, and an official residence could be appointed him in the capital.

"In case your Excellency should not incline to believe in the good faith of this proposal, we request you to send an officer or officers beforehand to make the necessary arrangements. Should he have business, the Minister can come and go as occasion may require, and a high officer of corresponding rank will be appointed to transact business with him by correspondence and by personal interviews. A British officer and students with him would always reside in the building. This, we think, would be the best arrangement."

Mr. Lay's loud language was not the only mode of striking terror into the poor Chinese ; for on the next day (the 12th) actual violence was resorted to, no trace of which appears in this Blue Book, but for an account of which we are compelled to look to the statements of the Times newspaper, ostentatiously made on the authority of private letters, which must have come from the very councils of the embassies. Attributing to Keying's influence what occurred, which, if a disturbance or provocation at all, is, as we have said, not alluded to in Lord Elgin's despatches, and was, we believe, a mere trifle, the Times thus describes the next scene, incidentally reflecting on a very gallant officer in command at Canton, who had not been bloody or boisterous enough for the literary, or rather letter-writing staff.

"Poor Keying's tactics were only an imitation of those which he had seen succeed for a while at Canton. He intrigued to get himself appointed a co-commissioner, and succeeded. He tried, through the Americans, to induce the English to move their ships 'ever so little way' down the river, promising that, upon that, he should obtain mastery of the negotiations, and would settle all things. At the same time, he ordered the populace to manifest ill-will to the strangers, and as at Canton, so at Tientsin, quiet Europeans were insulted and stoned. But Keying was not so fortunate as Hwang, in having a Straubenzee to deal with. Lord Elgin and Sir Michael Seymour were equal to the occasion. Captain Sherard Osborn, with his galley's crew, and with Captain Dew and Mr. Oliphant helping him as volunteers, scaled the great gate of Tientsin, kicked the Tartar post before them, and let in a hundred marines, who were in march upon the city. This force marched through the city with a band and a couple of howitzers, administered a good fright to six delinquent householders who had encouraged the mob, and quieted Tientsin for the rest of the English occupation." — *London Times*, September 8, 1858.

Now this scandalous and bullying escapade, it will be observed, occurred on the very day after the Chinese Plenipotentiaries had promised to give up everything. It seemed to be done in order to clinch the matter. On the next day the Russian treaty was signed, and the intelligence communicated to Lord Elgin in these impressive words : —

"It is for your Excellency now to decide on the future fate of the

present government, and it will depend on you to place the necessary check on the stream which might otherwise deluge China, now newly opened, and cause so many disasters. The too great concessions which might be exacted from a government so roughly shaken would but precipitate its fall, which would only produce new and much graver difficulties. It is repose that is necessary for China, and it will be alike profitable both to the commerce and general interests of other states, who certainly desire nothing so much as to see the Chinese government arrive at the conviction that the concessions which it has now made are, above all, of utility to itself." — p. 331.

The rest of the tale is soon told. One other struggle by the Chinese Commissioners on the point of permanent residence at Peking, rather grotesque in form,\* — a few more coercive admonitions, in the administration of which Mr. Bruce, the present Minister, was the instrument, — another hint of a march on Peking, — the coincident arrival of a large body of soldiers and marines, — and all was over; and on the 26th of June, 1858, the British treaty, with all its privileges, and its train of benefits or woes to China and the world, was duly and solemnly executed.

Had this treaty, after it had received the ratification of both parties, been accepted by the Chinese, had the disaster of last June not occurred, and had Mr. Bruce possessed the moderation and good sense to go with a moderate retinue, by the route which the Chinese indicated, there would have been no words too strong for Lord Elgin's praise in obtaining so much for himself, and so much for other people, and no one would have felt disposed to scrutinize too closely the processes by which it was accomplished.† Such is the infirmity of this

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\* "3dly. As to admission into the capital. The north of China, it is to be feared, would be found very cold, and excessively dusty; added to this, the climate has many peculiarities, to which (a stranger) could not accustom himself. Your Excellency's government could send an officer to the capital on any future occasion that he might have business to transact there, and you might be spared the trouble of the journey." — p. 336.

† In Kweiliang's letter to Mr. Bruce, before the last battle, he says: "We wish that, on your arrival at the mouth of the river, you should anchor your vessels outside the bar, and then, without much baggage and a moderate retinue, proceed to the capital for the exchange of the treaties." Mr. Bruce, however, thought (despatch, 14th of June) that "another lesson, such as we gave last year at Tientsin, should be given, before they would come to reason."

world's reasoning. But it has been a failure, and hence the inquiry forces itself upon us, whether the original error is not, in some measure, the cause of disaster and disappointment now, — whether, if less had been asked, or if it had been asked in a different and gentler way, — if the threat to march on Peking or to bombard Tientsin had been omitted, and Mr. Lay had not raised his voice, and Mr. Bruce had not scolded, and Captain Osborn and Mr. Oliphant had not scaled the walls, and paraded their howitzers and barbarian sailors among the terrified populace of Tientsin, — whether, if all this had not been done, and the moderate diplomacy of Russia and the United States had been adopted, with the presence, but not the application of force, the result might not have been different. We honestly think it would have been, and this, so soon as transient irritation subsides, will, we trust, be the sober second-thought of British statesmen. Not, we fear, of Lord Palmerston; for we remember that, in 1856, he publicly proclaimed that, “in dealing with Eastern nations, we are not bound by the same laws of right and wrong as in treating with Christian nations”;\* — but of others, less unscrupulous, perhaps even of some of his colleagues; for we see that as recently as October last, about the time the news of Mr. Bruce's repulse reached England, Lord John Russell, in a speech at Aberdeen, said “that, in his opinion, foreign affairs should always be conducted with due regard to the rights and independence of foreign nations, and that the rule of doing as you would be done by is not only a maxim of Christian morality, but a rule of international conduct,” and Mr. Wilson, the new India Chancellor of the Exchequer, has said the same thing still more clearly, for he was speaking of Orientals. “I am one,” said he, “of those who believe that what is right in one part of the world, cannot be wrong in another. I believe in the universality of principles. I believe that kindness, generosity, and justice, exercised with a fair and firm hand, whatever the race may be, whatever the time may be, will produce the desired results.” The question may well arise, and it is one which humanity has a right to ask of those who are

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\* Quarterly Review, April, 1857, p. 530.

about to hurl the storm of war against China, whether there were fairness and gentleness and justice and Christian morality in the stern resolves, exactions, and coercions of a year ago.

Nor, it should be remembered, did coercion cease when the trembling Chinese put their names and seals to the treaty. On the 1st of July they wrote to Lord Elgin that it would be necessary for them in person to present the treaty to the Emperor, and that the ratification would be forwarded to Shanghai, to which his Lordship replied on the next day, closing with a most significant suggestion : —

“ The suggestion that the undersigned should await at Shanghai the Emperor’s approval of the treaty, signed and sealed on the 26th ultimo, has greatly surprised him.

“ The undersigned feels it his duty at once to state that he cannot consider peace to be re-established until he shall have been satisfied of the Emperor’s entire acceptance of the conditions agreed to by the Commissioners as her Majesty’s Plenipotentiaries. That the undersigned is neither acting in bad faith, nor insisting upon more than is justified by the usage of the Empire, is shown by the decree of the late Emperor, a copy of which he has the honor to enclose.

“ Within a few days of its arrival at Nanking, Sir Henry Pottinger began to move his fleet down the Yang-tse-kiang.

“ The undersigned is bound to require an assurance, similarly complete, of the purpose of his present Majesty to abide by the engagements entered into on his behalf. Without such an assurance the undersigned cannot quit Tientsin, and delay in procuring it will leave him no other alternative *but to order up to that city the large body of troops which has arrived from Hong Kong, and is now lying in the Gulf of Pechele.*” — p. 339.

This was not without effect ; for on the 4th of July the imperial decree ratifying all the treaties, specifying each, reached Tientsin, and on the 6th Lord Elgin requested the Admiral to withdraw “ the pressure which had been applied with so much effect.” Within forty-eight hours from that time every foreign flag had disappeared, every sailor and soldier had gone, the women and children came back to their homes, and the reign of terror was over ; and it was proclaimed to the Western World that China at last was opened.

That Lord Elgin viewed with some misgiving the policy of



severity to which his instructions and the hazard of failure in his high ambition drove him, is quite evident from the despatches which, when the excitement was over and the work done, he wrote from Shanghae to Lord Malmesbury. His personal sympathies, we doubt not, were with the Chinese. "The doctrine," said he, a few months later, "that every Chinaman is a knave, and manageable only by bullying and bravado, is, I venture with all deference to think, pushed a little too far, in our dealings with these people." In fact, he was not unlike the Scotch post-boy in the Antiquary, "a whip in his hand and a tear in his eye," and he could hardly conceal his repugnance at what he had to do. On the 6th of July he wrote an account of Mr. Bruce's last communication.

"On the 24th," said he, "Mr. Bruce had an interview with the Imperial Commissioners for the purpose of arranging definitely the terms of the treaty. He was perfectly successful in the object of his visit, though he felt very sensibly the painfulness of the position of a negotiator [!] who had to treat with persons who yield nothing to reason, and *everything to fear*."

And on the 12th, from Shanghae, he said :—

"The concessions obtained in it from the Chinese government are not in themselves extravagant; nor, with the exception of the important principle of extraterritoriality, in excess of those which commercial nations are wont freely to grant to each other; but in the eyes of the Chinese government they amount to a revolution, and involve the surrender of some of the most cherished principles of the traditional policy of the empire. They have been extorted, therefore, from its fears." — p. 345.

The strongest proof, however, — and to this we call special attention, — that the British Plenipotentiary thought he had gone to the very verge of what was tolerable, — and in saying this, we beg to be understood as bearing the most explicit testimony, not only to his natural gentleness of temper, but to his eminent good-sense, — was, that when afterward at Shanghae he talked the matter over with the Commissioners, when Mr. Bruce had gone, and Mr. Lay did not talk loud, and the sailors and marines were dispersed, Lord Elgin entirely changed his mind as to the resident embassy at Peking, and expressly

promised to waive it, assimilating his treaty in this respect to those of the other powers. In the despatch we have just quoted, of July 12th, Lord Elgin had expressed his first opinion very emphatically by saying: "The concession in the treaty, which is, I believe, pregnant with the most important consequences to China, is that of the principle that a British Minister may henceforward *reside* at Peking."\* Nor is there any reason to question the entire sincerity of what was thus written. The phantom of Russian influence and Russian extension darkens the mind of every English public man of a certain school; the vision of a new Constantinople in the Far East, with (if we may coin a word) De Redcliffism there to control, direct, advise, and perhaps improve, is very attractive; and no one can doubt that Lord Elgin, a far-seeing and sagacious statesman, honestly believed that English presence and influence at Peking would be beneficial to the Chinese themselves, and invigorate their staggering institutions. But subsequent reflection and the really impressive representations of the Imperial Commissioners, led to an early change. On the 22d of October they addressed a long letter on this subject, from the *précis* of which we make the following extract, showing how well the Chinese can reason:—

"5. Article III. of the treaty makes it optional with England either to leave a representative in permanence at Peking, or to send one there occasionally. Lord Elgin is too intelligent and considerate to decide without deliberation on a course which does violence to any one.

"6. The objections to permanent residence are these:—The Banner men of Peking are numerous, and have no experience of foreigners.

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\* There is something very striking in the following extract. Mr. Bruce was authorized, it seems, by Lord Elgin, to make certain modifications, but found that their terror rendered the concessions unnecessary.

"Mr. Bruce, at my request, waited on the Imperial Commissioners on the forenoon of the 26th. He informed them that I was ready to sign, on the afternoon of that day, the treaty in the shape in which it then stood; but that, if they intended to depart from the terms agreed upon, I should consider negotiations at an end. Mr. Bruce had authority to make certain modifications in the Articles complained of, if he should find it necessary to do so. He used that authority, however, very sparingly, as your Lordship will learn from the report by Mr. Lay of this important interview, the copy of which is enclosed in my despatch of the 3d of July."—p. 337.

The business of the official establishments in Peking of all ranks is purely metropolitan ; their members have no acquaintance with provincial populations or their affairs ; the character of the Pekingese is entirely different from that of the Chinese of the east and south of China. Hence a possibility of misunderstandings and collisions, the evil effect of which on China would be great, however insignificant the cause.

"7. The present condition of China from rebels is such that it is highly desirable to give her subjects no occasion of misgiving.

"8. China and England are now at peace for evermore. Lord Elgin's known sense of justice would not surely allow him to put a friendly nation in a difficult position. Her Britannic Majesty's character for well-doing and justice would similarly deter her from availing herself of the wealth and power of her state to distress China, in defiance of the friendly dispositions of the latter.

"9. England has gained something or other in all the Articles of the treaty, which are numerous, and the Emperor has with unusual complaisance confirmed every one of them. The residence in Peking is most inconvenient to China. It is a right not conceded to France or America, but to England alone. Lord Elgin is therefore prayed to consider how the proposition to forego it may be met. China is willing to send a Secretary of State or President to reside in any of the provinces, and will leave it to the representative of England to choose his own place of residence, at which the minister appointed as above will be placed in relations with him. As soon as Nanking is retaken, he can if he pleases reside at Nanking. If any part of the new treaty be infringed, he will be at liberty to reside permanently at Peking.

"10. What is here urged is not a breach of treaty. The Commissioners' request is legitimately based on the words 'either,' 'or.' They trust Lord Elgin will accede to their request, and, if there be anything that will advantage England without prejudice to China, they will similarly undertake to consider how it may be effected." — p. 405.\*

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\* The translation is given at length afterward, and there we find the following : —

"When the Commissioners Kwei and Hwa negotiated a treaty with your Excellency at Tientsin, British vessels of war were lying in that port, there was the pressure of an armed force, a state of excitement and alarm ; and the treaty had to be signed at once, *without a moment's delay. Deliberation was out of the question : the Commissioners had no alternative but to accept the conditions forced upon them.* Among these were some of real injury to China, (to waive which) would have been of no disadvantage to your Excellency's government ; but in the hurry of the moment the Commissioners had no opportunity of offering your Excellency a frank explanation of these." — p. 406.

Again, on the 28th, they say pathetically : —

“The established reputation of your Excellency for justice and straightforwardness, for kind intentions and friendly feeling, make us place the fullest confidence in your assurance that, when you exacted the condition referred to, you were actuated by no desire whatever to do injury to China. The permanent residence of foreign ministers at the capital would, notwithstanding, be an injury to China in many more ways than we can find words to express. In sum, in the present critical and troublous state of our country, this incident would generate, we fear, a loss of respect for their government in the eyes of her people ; and that this would indeed be no slight evil it will not be necessary, we assume, to explain to your Excellency with greater detail.”

It was difficult to answer this, and Lord Elgin evidently was much impressed by it ; for on the same day he wrote home : —

“The letter is very becoming in its tone ; but expresses a strong hope that her Majesty will exercise the option conferred on her by Article III. of the treaty of Tientsin, by directing her Minister in China to visit Peking occasionally, instead of residing there permanently.

“Your Lordship is well aware of the view which I take of the advantages which are likely to accrue from the establishment of direct diplomatic relations with the court of Peking. It may, however, be worthy of consideration, whether or not these advantages can be secured without resorting to a measure which, in the opinion of the Chinese, would shake the stability of the empire, by impairing the Emperor’s prestige. At any rate, I trust that your Lordship will not come to any final decision on this point, until you hear from me again.” — p. 406.

In a fortnight he seems to have been convinced : for on the 5th of November he communicated to Lord Malmesbury his decision, — to the effect that he had concluded to advise his government to give up this very residence at Peking, and to be contented with an occasional visit. The following extract is full of interest, especially as it is illustrated by what has occurred since at the mouth of the Peiho, the very place where Lord Elgin, it seems, advised his government that new fortifications were erected, that a “desperate resistance” might be expected, and that no one could complain if it were so.

“In my despatch of the 22d ultimo I inclosed a *précis* of a very im-

portant letter which I had just then received from the Chinese Imperial Commissioners. I informed your Lordship that it was very becoming in its tone; but that it expressed a very strong hope that her Majesty would exercise the option conferred on her by Article III. of the treaty of Tientsin, by directing her Minister to visit Peking occasionally, instead of residing there permanently, and I requested you not to come to any final decision on this point until you should have heard from me again. I have now the honor to transmit herewith a translation of the letter in question, and of the correspondence to which it has led.

"In order that your Lordship may correctly apprehend the drift of this correspondence, it is necessary that I should state at the outset that the Chinese authorities contemplate the permanent residence of foreign ministers at the capital with more aversion and apprehension than any of the other innovations introduced by the treaty of Tientsin.

"In reply to the representations which I have been able, through private channels, to make to them in favor of this arrangement, as the best means of obviating international disputes, and of preventing them, when they chance to arise, from assuming undue proportions, they are wont to urge, in the first place, of course, the traditional policy of the Empire, and then the difficulties in which, if he were constantly resident at the capital, the idiosyncrasies of an individual foreign functionary, of violent temper and overbearing demeanor, might involve them. As regards this latter point (I refer now to communications which have passed between us through official channels) they are in the habit of illustrating their meaning by examples. 'If we were quite sure,' say they, 'that you would always send to us men thoroughly wise, discreet, and considerate, it might be different; but if, for instance, so and so were appointed to represent a foreign government at Peking, (and the right, if exercised by you, would of course be claimed by all other governments,) a month would not elapse before something would occur which would place our highest officers in the dilemma of having either to risk a quarrel or to submit to some indignity which would lower the Chinese government in the eyes of its own subjects.' No doubt such apprehensions are to some extent chimerical; but I am bound to admit that I do not consider them to be altogether so. . . .

"Again, we know from the Peking Gazette that the Emperor has issued orders for the reconstruction of the forts which we knocked down at the mouth of the Peiho, and for the erection of other works to protect Peking. It would hardly, I think, be reasonable on our part to require that the Emperor of China should leave his capital undefended for the express purpose of enabling us, whenever we see fit so to do, to attack him there. Nor do I, on the other hand, think that any works

which he is likely to raise will prevent us from reaching it, if we resolve to go thither in pursuance of a treaty right. At the same time, it may be a question whether it would be expedient to exercise the option conferred on her Majesty by Article III. of the treaty of Tientsin in such a manner as would force the Emperor to choose between a desperate attempt at resistance and passive acquiescence in what he and his advisers believe to be the greatest calamity which can befall the empire.

"Short, however, of the extreme measure of a forcible resistance to the invasion of the capital by foreign ministers, with their wives and establishments, (these latter being, it appears, in the eyes of the Chinese, more formidable than the ministers themselves,) there is a risk which I feel myself bound, under present circumstances, not to pass over without notice.

"Your Lordship may perhaps remember that, on the eve of the day on which the treaty of Tientsin was signed, I received a representation to the effect that the Chinese Commissioners would certainly lose their heads if they conceded the Articles in my treaty providing for the residence of a British Minister at Peking, and empowering British subjects to travel through the country for trading purposes.

"This representation caused me *a good deal of anxiety* at the time; but I resolved to disregard it, and to act on the hypothesis that, being in the vicinity of Peking with an armed force, I might so demean myself as to make the Emperor think that he was under an obligation to his Plenipotentiaries for having made peace with me even on the terms objected to.

"If, however, after having in terms so ample and language so respectful acceded to my requirements, they are compelled to report to the Emperor that they have failed to obtain from me any consideration whatever for the representations urged by them on behalf of their sovereign, I fear that their degradation and punishment will be inevitable, and I need hardly say, that an occurrence of this nature would tend much to unsettle the Chinese mind, and to beget doubts as to the Emperor's intentions with respect to the new treaty."

The despatch closes with a practical suggestion.

"As, in a transaction of so much delicacy, the choice of each word is important, I must refer your Lordship to the enclosed correspondence for a full exposition of the method which I have pursued in furtherance of these ends. The upshot of it all is this: that, after reserving, in the most unqualified terms, her Majesty's right to exercise, as she may see fit, the option conferred on her by Article III. of the treaty of Tientsin, I have undertaken to communicate to her Majesty's government

the representations that have been made to me on the subject by the Chinese Imperial Commissioners, and humbly to submit it as my opinion, that, if her Majesty's Ambassador be properly received at Peking, when the ratifications are exchanged next year, and full effect given in all other particulars to the treaty negotiated at Tientsin, it will be expedient that her Majesty's representative in China be instructed to choose a place of residence elsewhere than at Peking, and to make his visits to the capital either periodically, or as frequently as the exigencies of the public service may require.

"And further, although I adhere to every opinion I have formerly expressed, with regard to the importance of the establishment of direct diplomatic relations with the court of Peking, I am bound to admit that the position of a British Minister at the capital during the winter months, when the thermometer — if Humboldt is to be believed — falls to forty degrees below zero, the River Tientsin is frozen, and the Gulf of Pechelee hardly navigable, would not be altogether a pleasant one. And that it is even possible that, under such circumstances, his actual presence might be to the mandarin-mind less awe-inspiring than the knowledge of the fact that he had the power to take up his abode there whenever the conduct of the Chinese government gave occasion for complaint." — p. 411.

The "upshot," therefore, of the whole was, — for the British government agreed to it, — that the permanent embassy at the capital was to be abandoned, and in this respect the Western treaties — those made by gentle means, and those extorted by force — became identical.

Here ends the story of the negotiation of the treaties of Tientsin, and our limits, nearly exhausted, forbid our saying anything either as to the treaties themselves, or as to the agreeable concord which appears to have existed at Shanghae, on their return from the north, between Lord Elgin and Mr. Reed, and of which advantage was taken to effect a thorough revision of the tariff and commercial relations. We must pass by, for the same reason, Lord Elgin's Japan episode, his voyage up the Yang-tse-Kiang, three hundred miles farther than Western adventure had ever gone before, and also all reference to the settlement of the claims, which was by the English localized at Canton. The American claims, to the amount of seven hundred thousand dollars, were provided for, in a convention signed in November, and were to be liquidated by an issue of

debentures, receivable for duties, at the treaty ports of Fuh-chau, Shanghai, and Canton, which has since been carried into effect. On the 19th of May, 1859, Lord Elgin reached London to receive the honor and gratitude he had so fully earned.

We cannot close this article without a word as to what has occurred since. The disaster at the Peiho on the 25th of July seems to have been the perfection of blundering on all sides, and we can hardly believe that what has been so stupidly done can be justified to the extent of making it the cause of war. We do not interpret Lord John Russell's despatch as an approval of Mr. Bruce's conduct. After stating that, up to a certain time, — the arrival off the Peiho, — what occurred was "clear and free from all obscurity," and was "certainly approved," as being "in strict conformity with instructions," his Lordship adds guardedly, and, we must say, in very loose English: "Upon arriving at the mouth of the Peiho, you were placed in circumstances of great difficulty, and in selecting the course you were to pursue, you were obliged to found that course mainly upon presumptive evidence. In these circumstances you had to weigh contingencies upon contingencies, upon which no safe calculation could be made. I can *only* say, therefore, that her Majesty's government, without being able, in the present state of their information, to judge precisely what measures it might have been most advisable for you to adopt at the moment, see nothing, in the decision you took, to diminish the confidence they repose in you." This, surely, is not very strong. If we mistake not, the military law makes a distinction between "acquitted" and "honorably acquitted," the Scotch between "not proven" and "not guilty," and Parliamentary law between an adverse vote, and a vote of "want of confidence"; and we are glad to observe that, with all the official influence which he can, of course, command, Mr. Bruce has been able to secure only the meagre verdict of not being censured. Before this article sees the light, we shall know what success has actually attended Mr. Ward's pacific diplomacy, and whether the American treaty of Tientsin, so much scoffed at a year ago, is not the only commercial one ratified. We sincerely trust that the first fruit of



such success will be the offer of mediation and good offices, which, by the treaty of Tientsin, we are bound to make, and which we trust will not be declined. It may be necessary to await the decision and action of the President on this point, but there can be no reason to doubt that he will continue to pursue that dignified and conciliatory policy, from which, in our relations with the East, he has never departed one hair's breadth, and which, carried out by our representatives abroad, has been attended with so good results. It may be, that the "good offices," the material aid, afforded by the American squadron to Admiral Hope's discomfited flotilla, may induce the British government to listen to an offer of mediation, made disinterestedly, and in perfect good faith. We sincerely hope it will. We have no interests in China but those which are commercial. Great Britain ought to have no others, and to commercial interests a China war, with its probable consequences, — the overthrow of an insecure dynasty, and the extension of revolt and internal confusion over those vast provinces whose peaceful industry alone satisfies the cravings of the West, — is fraught only with unmitigated evil and perplexity. It was well said by one of the Opposition speakers in Parliament, in 1857, — one the eclipse of whose genius we all deplore: "In dealing with nations less civilized than ourselves, it is by lofty truth and forbearing humanity that the genius of commerce contrasts the ambition of conquerors. If you talk of the interests of trade, remember, you cannot prosper if you make yourselves the objects of detestation to those you trade with. You may, indeed, force a road for your merchants over the ruins of cities and the corpses of your customers, but, I warn you, your trade will fly the place; for commerce recoils from bloodshed,

‘Et udam spernit humam fugiente pennâ.’”